CERTAINE Godlie and learned Ser- mons.

Made vpon these sixe following Parables of our Sauiour Christ, decla- red in the Gospell.

1. *Of the vncleane spirit.*
2. *Of the prodigall sonne.*
3. *Of the Rich man and Lazarus.*
4. *Of the vvounded man.*
5. *Of the vnmercifull seruant.*
6. *Of the faithfull seruant.*

By S. I.

Nascimur in commune bonum.

At London,
Printed by I.R. for R.B. and are to be solde in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Sunne.
1601.

To the right Reuerend Father in God, Ma. Doctour *Babington*, Bishop of VVorcester, a plentifull measure of Gods grace in this life; and eternall ioyes in the *life to come*.

MAtters of learning, are most fit to be presented to thē that excel therein. For as the prouerbe is, *Scientia neminē habet inimicum, præter ignorantem*: so by the same rule may I say, *Scientia neminem habet amicum et Mecænatem, nisi studiosum fautoremque bonarum literarum*. Let wisdom grow in fauour with them that haue knowledge, and waighty discourses be accepted of learned men. *Caluine* and *Erasmus*, making their Comentaries vpon the New-testament, tooke

choice to dedicate them to Kings and Princes, & Nobles, which I take it, was not only to make them in loue with religion, but also to make them to fauour and further it, to the vtmost of theyr power. Though my selfe be nothing comparable, & not so much as worthy to carry their bookes after such learned men, yet I may take example frō them.

And although (Right Reuerend) I know right well, that you not onely fauour religion, but are an earnest professor thereof, & that I need not to exhort and stirre you vp therein: yet the principal scope of this my writing is, & of this my dedication, in most humble & earnest sort to desire you, that as you haue done much good already, by your printed labors, so you would vouchsafe yet more and more, to further Gods church & the ministerie by this means. Among whom my selfe beeing but a mean member, haue reaped great profit by your labors. For the which, as we of the ministery chiefly, are to acknowledge gods goodnes for raising vp such an instrument in his church, so as many

as haue beene furthered & bettered by your painfulnesse, are also to account thẽselues beholding vnto you, as I am, I speak it vnfainedly. I heare being one of your neighbour Diocesse, that you haue great care of a learned ministery, and at the entrance of your honourable place in VVorster, you shewed your selfe a forward man therein. I beseech your Lordship to pardõ my presumption, and to take my meaning in good part. For them that are vnlearned, and eyther would, or by any means are like to enter into the ministery, where you haue to doe, either you may aduice thẽ (as no doubt you doe) to stay a longer time, till they be sufficient, or debar thẽ, or exhort and counsell them to take vpon them another course of life. For those beeing vnlearned, that are already placed, who considering their ovvne wants and weaknesse, might bestowe some part of their liuing vppon sufficient and able men, to helpe to discharge that vvaightie dutie which lyeth vpon thẽ to performe in that behalfe; if they be vnwilling this way, & of themselues wilbe studious & painful, endeuouring

to discharge a good conscience in their place and calling, no better helps can they haue then learned bookes. Who if they would but follow the direction which you haue already set foorth, I dare assure them they may doe much good in theyr congregation. Nowe as Kings and Princes desirous to gouerne theyr people well, doe not onely commaund them to liue in due obedience and ciuill order, but also doe prescribe lawes & statutes, that thereby they may be directed to liue as they ought to do: so such men as your selfe vnder Kings and Princes, beeing appoynted great Gouernours, & hauing a great charge, doe well to perswade your Clergie vnder your iurisdiction, that they haue especiall care to instruct the people cōmitted to them: but they doe better, that by all meanes they can deuise, doe help and further them, to make them able Ministers.

The example of your Lordshippes painfull preaching, is a notable incouragement in this behalfe, but if it would please you as yet further, to preach to thē by your painfull pen, they might at

good

good leysure instruct themselues, & by due meditatiō make good vse therof to the edification of others. And that you may continue in your godly care of a learned ministery, as also the vnlearned may take heed what they doe, & howe much heerein they offend, let mee further perswade, by the words of that lerned and reuerend man Ma. Doctour *Some*, who in a printed booke aunswering *Penry* his obiections, sheweth his great forwardnes in this matter.

I beseech you let it not seeme tedious vnto you, though I recite vnto you that which there I haue read. The vvordes are these as followeth. I haue dealt very earnestly and humbly, by writings and speech, for a learned ministerie. I haue receiued very comfortable aunswere of very great and honourable personages, who haue alreadie, (thanks be to God) employed some, and will no doubt imploy more in the churches seruice. *Penry* maketh a speech as proceeding from vnlearned ministers, chap. 25. vvhich make the ministery *vltimum refugium*. They in their practise say, Lord, whether thou cōmittest vnto vs any charge

Doctour Somes desire of a lerned ministerie.

of soule or no, we care not; but rather then we should not haue the meanes to liue in this life, (for this is theyr onelie scope in continuing in the ministerie,) require the blood of soules, and vvhat thou wilt at our hands. And so sencelesse men, they sell themselues body & soule, vnto euerlasting woe & destruction.

To this speech Ma. Doctour *Some* aunswereth wisely and discreetly. I am so far (saith he) from beeing a defence, to ignorant eyther Leuites before, or Ministers nowe, that I confesse freelie, that their entrance into the priesthood and ministerie, and continuance in it, most absurdly, vvas and is a grieuous sinne.

If the Lorde hath or shall punish them seuerely for theyr intrusion, into so high a calling, they cannot plead not guiltie. If they doe it is in vaine, for at Gods barre, they shall not be acquitted. You write that the ignorant Ministers, whom you call sencelesse men, doe sell themselues body & soule to euerlasting destruction. Your speech is true; *Illi viderint:* Let them if they be not grace-

lesse

lesse and shamelesse, looke into it. All that I say vnto it is, the Lorde for his Christ his sake, heale that sore. It is not so grieuous (thankes be to GOD) as it was, I assure my selfe it will be lesse, I would to God it were none.

So farre Maister Doctor *Some*, who I am perswaded vttered this; not so much addicted vnto learning, (beeing himselfe a man verie learned) as principallie vpon a good conscience, considering the vvaightie charge that lyeth vppon the Minister to performe, to teach, to confute, to comfort, vvhich cannot bee performed vvithout learning.

Novve in token of a thankfull mind, for that good which I haue alreadie receiued by your publique painfulnesse, (both by priuate meditation, and publique practise, for the which the Lorde be praysed,) I haue made bolde to present this Booke vnto your Lordship, not so much for patronage and protection, (which also I desire) as in reuerend sort, once againe to exhort you, and to drawe you on, to be mindfull of vs of the ministery; and to remember

my

my humble request heerein.

Concerning the Reader, he may perswade himselfe, that that doctrine shall most preuaile with his auditory, that standeth vppon diuersities of instructions, leading the minde onward, with a kinde of variety & delight. And therefore I haue taken principall choyce in this sort, as you see, to set forth these parables with as fit & apt notes as I could, being furthered heerein, by Gods help and assistance. Wherein if there be any thing to be liked, it is Gods dooing, if there be any fault, it is mine owne.

God grant that we all, of the ministerie especially, may proue to be wise virgins, and that such as your selfe, vvhich haue receiued fiue talents, may well remember that these two twinnes vvere borne both together, at one & the selfe same time, *Honores et Onera.*

Your Lordships as vnknowne, yet praying God to prosper your labors to his glory, and the good of the Ministerie.

S. I.

Memoriæ Mater Methodus.

The seuerall deuisions of euery particuler Parable.

Of the vncleane Spirit. Luke. 11. 24.

This Parable may be deuided into these three parts following.

1. *First all of vs, are subiect to the manifold temptations of the deuill, who preuaileth in some more, then in othersome.*

2. *Secondly, there is a time when the deuill goeth out of vs, eyther by Gods secrete*

crete grace, or good counsell, or true and vnfained repentance.

3. *Thirdly, his wofull returne, in them that are not watchfull, and doe not theyr best endeuour to keepe him out, when they are once free from his thraldome, and slauery.* Psalm. 125. 5.

Of the prodigall Sonne.

Luke. 15. 11.

¶ *This parable setteth foorth vnto vs, these foure things.*

1. *The excellent estate of man, beeing furnished with Gods blessings and graces in a plentifull measure, under the description of the prodigall sonne, hauing receaued all his patrimony.*

2. *The decayed estate of man, being left vnto himselfe, and so falling from God, and prouoking gods displeasure, by his manifold offences, and daily and continuall sinnes, thereby working his owne woe and destruction.*

3. The

3. *The restored estate of man, through the mercy of GOD, expressed in the great kindnes of the Father, that went out to meete his sonne. As also in the death and passion of Iesus Christ, expressed by the killing of the fatte Calfe, the best rayment, the Ring, and shooes, and royall feast. Whereof the prodigall Sonne is made pertaker by faith and repentance.*

4. *Lastlie, we ought to be so farre from repining and grudging at the saluation of sinners, and theyr accepting into fauour, that wee ought rather to reioyce, beholding Gods great mercie, and gracious and vnspeakable goodnes heerein.*

All vvhich matters are set foorth, by the declaration of diuers particuler circumstances, as the Text doth afford.

The

The Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus.

Luke. 16. 19. 20. &c.

¶ *In this Parable are set downe these fiue considerations following.*

1. *First, the example of a wicked worldling, very loose and carelesse, setting light by* GOD, *and despising his poore neighbour.*

2. *Secondlie, the patterne of a godlie man, submitting himselfe to Gods will in all his distresses: and waiting for comfort and deliuerance, according to Gods good will and pleasure.*

3. *Thirdly, the ioyfull estate of the godly after death, beeing full of unspeakable comfort and glory.*

4. *Fourthly, the lamentable estate of the wicked after death.* Wisd. 5.

5. *Lastly, the Word of God beeing deliuered by the Prophets, Christ, and the Apostles, is reuerently to be heard, & dutifully to bee obeyed, vvhich to our great good, calleth vs vnto repentance and newnesse of life.*

The *Parable* of the *wounded* man, that came downe from Ierusalem to Ierico.

(∴)

Luke. 10. 25.

¶ *Many apply this Parable to the decayed estate of man, and howe hee is restored: but by the circumstances of the text, it seemeth rather to be wrested. For heere is set downe a comparison, betwixt mentall religion, and outward profession, the notable triall whereof is seene, in the workes of charitie.*

This parable may be deuided into these three parts.

A. 1. The

1. *The deceauable opinion of Man, that thinketh religion dooth consist rather in the knowledge of Gods will, then in the workes of charitie.* Iam.chap.1,27. Mat. chap.5,20.

3. *That heathen people, as also those of a contrary religion, excell true professors in the practise of good workes. And so much the more, because they put the hope of theyr saluation in theyr good deedes, looking for a reward, not of mercy, but of desert. The Priest and the Leuite went by, and the Samaritane shewed mercie: and of those tenne that were healed of the leprocie, onelie one returned to giue thankes, and hee was a Samaritan.*

The vse and application of the Parable, in the commaundement of our Sauiour Christ, inioyning & exhorting vs vnto the workes of charitie.

¶ An

¶ An other deuision of this parable.

¶ *This Parable may bee referred to these three heads.*

1. *The vnmercifull disposition of most men and vvomen, giuen too much to selfe loue.*

2. *That there be fewe, that haue care of the poore, and of the misery of them that are distressed, and that haue any fellowe feeling.* 1. Cor. chap. 12. verse. 25, 26, 27, 28.

3. *That as it is Gods commaundement, so there is nothing more acceptable to god, and more commendable before men, then to doe good to those that stande in neede. Which is an especiall fruite of faith.*

Of the vnmercifull Seruaunt, that would not forgiue his fellowe.

Math. 18. 21.

¶ *In which example or parable, these foure matters are to be examined.*

1. *An exhortation to the mutuall forgiuenes of offences, from the example of God, daily forgiuing those that are far vnworthie.*

2. *The ingratitude of the world toward God, and theyr vnmercifull disposition, toward theyr neighbour.*

3. *The punishment of their ingratitude, and cruell behauiour.*

4. *The vse and application of the Parable.*

¶ The

The Parable of the faithfull seruant.

Math. 24. 45.

¶ *This Parable standeth vppon a twofolde description.*

The first is, of a painfull Minister, whose properties are to be faithful & wise, looking for his Maisters comming.

And whose reward is, that he shall be blessed, that is founde so dooing. As also that hee shall be made Ruler, ouer all his Maisters goods.

The second is, of a negligent Minister, whose properties are, that presuming of his Maisters long stay, he waxeth altogether carelesse of his dutie. And also behauing himselfe very vndiscreetly, giueth himselfe to all licentiousnesse.

Whose punishment is, that his expectation shall be deceaued, and his hope suddenlie cut off. Furthermore, that his portion shall be with the hypocrites. The greenousnesse of which punishment, is heere expressed in these words: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The

The Parables of the Gospell moralized.

¶ Of the vncleane Spirit.

LVKE. 11. 24.

When the vncleane spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest. And when he findeth none, hee saith, I will returne vnto mine house whence I cam out. And when he cometh, he findeth it (empty) swept, & garnished. Then goeth he, & taketh to him seuen other spirits, worse then himselfe: and they enter in & dwell there. So the last state of that man, is worse then the first.

IN this Parable these 3. principall considerations are to be obserued. First, that all of vs (by nature) are subiect to the temptations of the deuill, to his often & manifold temptations, who preuaileth in some, more then in other some. Adam was tempted, & hee fell; and the wicked continually yeeld to his temptations, & are ouercome.

come. Christ was tempted, and he resisted, and vanquished him, and in him and by his power, all the godly are cōquerers ouer the deuil,& his wicked & ouerthrowing temptations. Secondly, there is a time when the deuil goeth out of vs,either by Gods grace, or good counsel,or true & vnfained repentance. He goeth not out willingly & of him selfe, but he is throwne & thrust out.

Thirdly,his woful return in them,that do not endeuour to keepe him out, because their estate shalbe far worse, and they shall hardly or neuer be cured and recouered. Our maisterful sin,wherunto we are giuen, more then to any of the rest, is neuer alone, but is accompanied with many other. And when the deuill entreth againe,he brings in with him; nay,a legion folow after him,for he comes with power enough, & thinks it vnpossible that hee should be resisted, or if he be resisted, he wil not so be vanquished, neither wil he euer giue vs vp, so long as we are compassed with this mortall and sinfull body of ours. Rom. 7. 24. Heb. 12. 1.

Some think this parable was vttred to the wicked Scribes and Pharises,and the rather through the prouocation of their blasphemous speech, against their own conscience,

which ſaid, that he caſt out deuils by Belzebub. But it is more likely he ſpake it to the man, that was poſſeſſed with the deuill, out of whom the deuil was caſt out. Where it is most worthy of our meditation to cōſider, by whom he was caſt out, not as the Phariſes ſuppoſe by Belzebub, but by one more mighty & powerful then Belzebub, and all the deuils in hel. 1.Ioh.3.8. For to this purpoſe appeared the ſon of god, that he might loſe the works of the deuil, which are ſinne, death, & hel. Greatly to cōfort the godly in al diſtreſſes of body & mind, while they are aſſured, not onely that through his help all deſperate diſeaſes are cured, but alſo that the malicious work of ſathan, is by his almighty power, vtterly deſtroied and ſcattered. Giuing vs ſufficient encouragement, not onely not to feare that hurt which ſathan may worke againſt vs, but alſo to haue recourſe to him in all our diſtreſſes, either of body or of minde, how dangerous ſoeuer they be, as alſo to giue him thanks & praiſe, for his manifold goodnes toward vs, & being deliuered, to take heede, leaſt by our negligence, wee fall into the like dangers againe. As Chriſt gaue warning, to him that had been diſeaſed thirtie eyght yeeres, and nowe was

healed, & brought to his former ſtrength, by the vertue of his heauenly power and gracious goodnes: Iohn. 5. Behold, thou art made whole, ſin no more, leaſt a worſe thing come vnto thee.

Chriſt put forth this parable, not ſo much to warne him, out of whom the deuill vvas caſt, as alſo in the behalfe of the company that was preſent, and the ſtanders by. Ioh. 12. 30. To teach all the godly and the Miniſters eſpecially, to haue great regard of theyr talke, that it may be powdered with ſalt, that it may tend to edifying, and may giue grace to the hearers. Coloſ. 4. 6. For often-times the ſtanders by, do more mark, & giue more diligent heed, to that vvhich is ſpoken, then the party to whō the ſpeech is directed, & to whom it doth moſt pertaine.

The ſcope of this parable is principallie to ſhew, how heauy a iudgement they heap vpon themſelues, which refuſing the grace of God offered vnto them, doe lay open a paſſage for the deuil to enter in againe. For if through theyr want of heede-taking, they giue him entrance again, he wil moſt hardly or neuer be driuen out. Therfore are we willed, to worke out our ſaluation vvith feare and trembling, Phil. 2. 12. And to

reſiſt

reſiſt the deuill, that ſo he may flie from vs, Iames. 4.7. And let vs apply this parable to Chriſt his meaning, as if he had ſaid, I came to expell ſathan out of you, that I might raigne within you. And if you will not that I ſhould raigne in you, and ouer you, and that you deſpiſe my grace and goodnes, in this ſort ſhall you be puniſhed, that the euil ſpirit which was caſt out of you, ſhal return againe, and your ſtubbornnes ſhall thus be rewarded, that you ſhall altogether be blinded, and reſerued to moſt wofull deſtruction.

How ſubiect we are to the deuils malicious intents & continuall temptations, may appeare heerein, not onely by his hatred to the common ſort of man-kind, but euen to the beſt. And beholding his temptations againſt our Sauiour, we may not looke that we ſhould ſtand free. For if hee were bold to vex the head, he will not ſpare the members. He ſpared not our firſt parents in Paradice, in the eſtate of their innocencie and integrity, how much leſſe will hee ſpare vs, which are compaſſed about with ſo great corruption & ſin? If he was bold to tempt Dauid to adultery and murder, Aaron and Salomon to idolatry, Peter to periurie, and

How ſubiect to the deuils temptations.

Saint Paule to the lusts of the flesh. 2.Cor. 12.7.8.9. How shall wee thinke to escape, which are not strengthned or endued with so great gifts & graces? If hee had his force against Iob, a righteous man, and one that feared God, God himselfe so witnessing of him, let vs make no other reckoning, but to prepare our selues to temptation. Hee is most busie about vs, when wee are least aware of his working. Hee is not onely diligent to compasse the earth to and fro, but hee goeth about like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom hee may deuoure. And therefore no maruell, though we read. Reue. 12. 12. a woe pronounced against the inhabitants of the earth, because the deuill beeing cast out, is come downe vnto them, vvho hath great wrath, because he knoweth hee hath but a short time. Hee could not preuaile in heauen, therefore he will shew all his force on the inhabitants of the earth. Whose wrath is great, & therefore we must looke for no mercy at his hands, whose time is but short, and therfore he wil lose no opportunity, whereby he may draw vs to our destruction. And seeing his time it but short, & the battel not long, let vs frame our selues, the more valiantly to resist him. And

here

here is the comfort of the godly, that the diſciples of Chriſt, ſaw ſathan fal downe from heauen like lightning. Lu.10.18. For as the force of the lightning is ſuddaine & ſoone gone, ſo the fierceſt aſſaults of the deuil, are but ſhort, to them that can through Gods grace endure and ouercome them. Again, this is another comfort, that though he be come down vpõ the earth, yet he is thrown out of heauen, and they whoſe eſpeciall delight is in heauenly meditations and godly exerciſes, are moſt free frõ his wrath, though not altogether free from his temptations.

This wo toucheth not the godly & them that reſiſt his temptations, for from them he ſoone flieth. Iam. 4. 7. but as for the vngodly he hath them in a ſnare, & wo be to thẽ that cannot auoid & reſiſt him. 2. Tim. 2.26. Howbeit, they that are moſt godly, the deuil aimeth at thẽ moſt, eyther to bring them to ſhame, or to vtter ouerthrow. As Chriſt ſaid to Peter, giuing him a forewarning, Lu.22.31. Simon, Simon, behold ſathan hath deſired to winow you as Wheat, but I haue prayed for thee, that thy fayth faile not. The corne that is winowed is ſifted to the vtmoſt, ſo doth ſathan tempt & try the godly, as far as poſſibly may be.

Againe,

Againe, the corne being winowed, doth ſhew it ſelfe in his excellency; ſo the godly beeing tryed and found ſtedfaſt, doe make Gods grace & goodnes to appeare in them moſt glorious, to theyr great commendation: neuertheleſſe, through their owne ſtrength, they cannot ſtand ſtedfaſt. 1.Cor. 10.12. To many theyr temptations are theyr crownes. Iam. 1. My brethren, count it exceeding ioy, when yee fall into diuers temptations. For hereby the woorthy vertues of the godly are made manifeſt, which lay hid before.

Sathan, to worke Ioſephs ouer-throwe, doth not only lay before him a moſt tempting baite, but ſifts him to the vtmoſt. For his lewde Miſtreſſe, through the deuils temptations, beeing bewitched vvith his loue, dooth not vpon the firſt deniall leaue of her ſute, but aſſaieth him againe and againe, vſing all meanes, and ſeeking all occaſions and opportunities, yet by Gods grace he with-ſtood them all. And though there-hence there aroſe his greateſt troubles, yet God did deliuer him out of all, & made his ſuppoſed ſhame, the greateſt occaſion of his future honour and renowne. The like may be ſaid of Suſanna.

As the deuill shewed all his policie in tempting Christ, so is his craft and subtiltie more forcible toward the godliest, & them that are best disposed, because they are som stay and hinderance vnto him, that he cannot so greatly preuaile in the worlde as hee would. For by theyr good counsaile, and good example, and godly behauiour, they winne many vnto God, and so doe greatlie crosse and preuent the mischieuous malice of the deuill; and because this sort of people, I meane the godly, are farthest out of his reach, so are the temptations which hee worketh against thē most mighty. Knowing that the rest of the world, in whom hee ruleth as he list, are easily carried away with shewes and shadowes.

After he had tempted Christ, and could not preuaile, it is said he left him for a season, purposing to returne again. So also dealeth hee with the godly, whom though hee cannot bring to the bent of his bow, though hee giue them respite for a vvhile, yet his mind is to set vpon them with fresh assaults. And many which haue good gifts and graces, he ouercommeth with ease and pleasure, and idlenes, & negligence, or else maketh them to abuse theyr gifts, to badde ends

ends and purposes. When we are idle, then is his fittest time to ouerthrow vs, nay, when wee are in godly exercises, hee ceaseth not then to practise his feates. Bringing in wandering thoughts, either when we heare the Word, or be at our prayers, being carelesse at the time, and forgetfull afterward. Hee maketh not onely the instruments of sinne, that is, all vices; but euen the best gyfts, and godliest exercises, the meanes to serue his turne, and to worke his mischiefe against vs.

As for them which haue a greater regard, and are more wary, he entreth & incloseth within them by slie and secret meanes; as if they are bent to any good, to hinder them from it, by shewing vnto them many difficulties, lets, and hinderances, that the vvay to heauen is straite & narow, and as it were the climing vp of a sandy hill, or high rock, and that the passage there-vnto, is full of dangers, and ful of troubles. Hee causeth many godly that are set in high roomes, to fall, and to giue offence, that thereby others might take a liberty to doe euill. Neyther doth hee refraine to inuegle the mindes of them that are set in highest degree, as the fairest marks hee hath to shoote at, to make them

them ſwarue and goe aſtray. As if they be in place of iudgement,to giue falſe ſenteuce for gaine of golde; if they be ſet to reproue the ſinnes of the people,to ſtand in feare of mens diſpleaſure; if in ſtate of nobility and great poſſeſſions, to make theyr will a law, according to the Latine verſe.

Sic volo,ſic iubeo,ſtet pro ratione voluntas.

So I will, and ſo I commaund, and let my will ſtand for a reaſon, and for a lawe. But eſpecially,& aboue the reſt, if they be princes,he tempteth and perſwadeth them,that all things are lawfull for them, that they are aboue theyr lawes, and are not to be cenſured by any man; whereby they perſwade vnto themſelues a liberty to ſinne,and who ſhould controule them, as was manifeſt in the Emperours of Rome.

His ſleights are ſo deceitfull, as to ſhewe the brauerie, pleaſure, and profit of anie thing, where-vnto hee tempteth; but hee keepeth backe from vs the miſchiefes that accompanie the ſame; and ſo blindeth our eyes as it were in the noone day. The murderer he maketh beleeue, that reuenge is an eaſe to the hart, & keepeth back that blood will require blood.

Him

Him that followeth the lewdnes of his fleshly lusts,he tickleth him on in this, how pleasant it is to continue & wallow in such sinfull desires , and keepeth backe the sicknesses & diseases, and other painful griefes, which may shorten his lyfe. Him that is giuen to theft and robbery, him hee perswadeth that hee may haue wealth at will, and liue as he list, and keepeth backe from him the horrour of a shamefull death, which he is not alwaies like to escape. Him that is giuen to slaunder his neighbour,what fauour and aduantage hee shall get by it, and keepeth backe this fearefull sentence , Who so priuily slaundereth his neighbour, him will I destroy.

Thus he stealeth all inconueniences and hurtful after-claps out of our harts, that we might not see the snare that is layde before vs, and the dangers that wee are like to fall into. All occasions hee watcheth , to allure and to prouoke vs, he commeth neere vnto vs; and feeleth our affections and inclinations, and offreth matters to our sences. If wee be giuen to drunkennes , he will intice vs by the pleasantnes of the wine , and the sweetnesse of the drinke ; If vnto gluttony, he will entice vs with plenty of meate and

and belly-cheere; If possessed by the lustes of the flesh, he will tempt vs with the beautie of women, who haue no care of theyr chastitie, and make small account of theyr honestie and good name; If vnto anie of these, or the like motions and temptations, wee giue our consent, then hath the deuill what he would, and so will hee vse meanes to proceed further, so will hee take aduantage against vs, by watching and prying into the corruption of our owne nature, and so becomming daily and continually our domesticall foe.

And although wee may keepe our selues in, neuer so warily, and restraine our selues, and haue an eye vnto our own inclinations, yet if we be too hard for him one way, hee will venture vpon vs another way, hee will neuer leaue, but stil be tempting of vs. And therefore our life is truely said to be a warfare, that wee might alwaies stand in a readines, to fight against these temptations, to be alwaies practised in auoiding that which is euill. When one temptation vvill not take place, our enemy tryeth another, as an inuincible fighter, that is still prepared vnto the combat. One temptation followeth in the necke of another, either in matters

which

which concerne the body and outward affayres, or such as pertaine to the spirit and minde of man, and to the estate of another life.

Therefore, vvhen one temptation is past, and the trouble ended, we must not thinke to rest vnmolested, as flesh & blood naturally perswadeth it selfe, we must not be lulled in the cradle of security, but we must alwayes prepare our selues to a newe & fresh assault, to be ready to incounter with euery new temptation. And this is the cause why many are ouer-come by temptations, because they promise peace and safetie vnto themselues in this life, because they are alwayes vnprouided, and neuer looke for the worst, neuer looke to preuent temptations. Beeing altogether ignorant of the deuils diligence, who is ready at all assaies, and looketh after euery occasion.

But wee in this matter are altogether as carelesse as they that are recouered from some great and dangerous sicknesse, vvee thinke vvee shall not fall into the same, or the like againe. Howbeit we must knowe, that temptations are more rife with vs then sicknesses, and the dangers of the one, farre greater then the other.

Most

Moſt men and wemens mindes hee inforceth to groſſe and ſhamefull ſinnes, and foule faults, whoſe harts by cuſtome hee hath fully poſſeſſed, and who lye open to his aſſaults. And aboue all other, his ordinary temptation is, by adultery, whoredome, vncleannes, and wantonneſſe: and therefore he is truly termed in this place, to be *the vncleane Spirit*. Hee is called an vncleane ſpirit, not onely becauſe he hath loſt his purity and his innocencie, wherein hee was firſt created, but alſo becauſe hee delights in all vncleanneſſe, & is an vtter enemy to all holines.

The vncleane Spirit.

Knowing well our inclination, and howe prone our corrupt nature & fleſh & blood is to this ſinne, he maketh vs to fight againſt our ſelues, while hee ſtandeth by to behold the conqueſt. According to that the Apoſtle Saint Peter giueth vs warning of, ſaying: Deerely beloued, I beſeech you as ſtrangers and pilgrims, to abſtaine from fleſhly luſts, which fight againſt the ſoule. It is not barely ſayd the Spirit, but the vncleane Spirit; to put a difference betwixt it and the Spirit of God, which is mentioned without any addition, Gal.5. & 6. Rom. 8. Eſay. 41. An euill ſpirit poſſeſſed Saul.

The

The deuill is sayd to be vncleane, principally in respect of his vncleane qualities, & because he prouoketh vs to vncleanenesse, making vs to fall from goodnes, that hee may draw vs to eternall torments.

2. There is a time when hee goeth out.

But how subtle & craftie, how powerfull and maisterfull soeuer his temptations be, yet there is a time when he goeth out of vs, though it be much against his wil. By good counsell much is brought to passe, vvhich is the meanes which GOD vseth to bring some into the way againe. Theyr owne conscience also testifying vnto them, howe farre they goe astray, and mouing them to forsake the deuill and all his workes. But the cheefest meanes whereby he is throwne out, is the conuerting grace of God, which doth not onely minister good thoughts, & good wishes, and good desires, but giueth sufficient effect and power thereunto, making vs able to throw out the deuill, and to resist him. The effect of this grace is, that it prouoketh vs to true repentance, vvhich doth not consist in the shedding of teares so much, as in the conuersion of the hart, & the amendement of our life and conuersation. All this notwithstanding, how soeuer he be throwne out, like a male-content he

neuer

neuer resteth, but seekes to enter in againe, being ful loth, to be long without his Mansion and dwelling place.

The force of Christ his redemption, doth principally work this exile and banishment of the deuill, & his daily intercession in the behalfe of the godly, doth worke it more and more. Where by the way wee haue a notable instruction, to consider how miserable the estate of mankinde is by nature, that he is the habitation & resting place of the deuill, and of the vncleane spirit. Neyther is it true onely in this or that man, but in all the posterity of Adam. And this is the glory & renowne of our naturall or rather corrupt integrity, that both in body & in soule the deuill raigneth in vs. By howe much the more therefore, haue we cause to extoll the vnspeakable mercy of God, who of filthy and lothsome stables of the deuill, maketh vs temples to himselfe, & consecrat places, for his holy spirit to rest in. Only diligent carefulnes is heere required, that we continually remember, how great a benefit we haue receaued, in that we are freed from so troublesome a guest, and so deadly an enemie. And now haue we time to consider Gods goodnes, & to continue therein, and

to behold the great dangers we were in, and to learne to auoide them, and to detest the deuils malice and mischieuous working, & to make a vow with our selues, not to be o-uercome and ruled by him.

By good counsell hee may be throwne out, and yet no sufficient discharge, but as he will thrust in againe, so will he easily be admitted. Some doe vtterly refuse good counsaile, and cannot abide to heare it, and hate them that bring it & shew their good will herein. And they that shew themselues tractable, for a while, may giue consent, and also haue a purpose to order themselues there-after, and yet the deuill can alter all, and make them stoope againe; and they that were at defiance, are ready nowe to shake hands, and to make a new couenant, vvhat friend and faythfull counsailour so euer speake against it. The guilt of conscience, the sight and knowledge of his sin, the feare of Gods displeasure, and danger of hell torments, is enough to make vs forsweare the deuill, and to hate his allurements, and to desire godly company and counsell, the deuill lets vs alone, so long as we are in this minde, he hopes wee will not long continue in this vaine, his time hee will

will watch, when he knowes how to take vs tardy, and then the Castell is wone againe, and a stronger garrison set to keepe it. The grace of God is the canon shot, that breaks downe the walls. When a strong man armed keepeth the breach and the passage, for a while he possesseth and keepeth all in peace: But when a stronger then he commeth vpon him, and ouercommeth him, hee must be faine to giue place. And this is a greater comfort, that his armour shall be taken away from him, and the spoiles shall be deuided. For Christ in his crosse and passion ouercame the power of the deuil for vs. Coloss.2.15. He hath spoiled the principalities and powers, and hath made a shew of them openly, and hath tryumphed ouer them in the same crosse, and made a glorious conquest. And not onely so, but also hauing led captiuity captiue, hath giuen gifts vnto men, that being strengthned by his grace, they also should be conquerours through the vertue of his power. And this is the glorious and tryumphant gyft of Gods grace, in vvhom vvhile it vouchsafeth to enter as a conquerour, it bringeth vvith it many good companions, and ioyfull effectes. 2, Corinthi. 7.

For godly ſorrowe is one of the attenders, which cauſeth repentance vnto ſaluation. And behold what godly ſorrow worketh, what great care followeth, to ſerue God, to liue in his feare, to auoid our former ſinns; what clearing of our ſelues in acknowledging our faults, & asking God forgiuenes, and deſiring to be renued in mind, and that God would create a new hart in vs. Pſ.51. What indignation & holy anger, that euer we were ſo much miſled; yea, what feare, leaſt we ſhould fall into the like offences againe; yea, how great deſire, to continue in a godly life; yea, what a zeale of Gods glory; yea, what puniſhment, what iudging & chaſtiſing of our ſelues, to preuent Gods anger and iudgement. 1. Cor. 11. 33. and practiſing thoſe vertues & godly qualities, which are contrary to our former vices.

Now although he be thus valiantly reſiſted, yet is hee not throughly vanquiſhed, nor vtterly baniſhed, though his force and power againſt vs is broken, yet his euill will remaines, and he wil let paſſe no deuice, but puts dangerous matters ſtill in practiſe againſt vs, and we ſhal not be free from him, ſo long as we liue in this world. Therefore it behoouetlı vs to looke vnto our ſelues, &

alwayes to ſtand vpon our watch. For like a malecontent, he neuer reſts,but ſeekes to enter in againe.

When the vncleane ſpirit is gone out of a man,he walketh through vncleane places ſeeking reſt.] For as a furious man is neuer at reſt, till he hath wrought a reuenge: ſo is the deuil neuer at reſt,till he hath done ſome hurt and miſchiefe. And this is his chiefeſt delight, and his chiefeſt ſtudy, his only practiſe and trade, wherein he is moſt diligent,though he haue no thankes for his paines. All his endeuours tend to mans deſtruction, and eſpecially where he is driuen away by the force of Chriſt his grace and power, the more is his deſire to hurt, the more is his rage. And before we are vouchſafed of this heauenly helpe, our mortall enemie makes but a ſport to raigne within vs at his pleaſure, but being driuen out of vs,he takes great griefe thereat;hauing thus loſt his booty and his pray, he gathers new ſtrength, and ſtirreth vp all his ſences and wits a-freſh,to ſet vpon vs,and to aſſault vs. Therefore is he ſaid to walke through dry places, becauſe his baniſhment out of vs, is to him, as a deſolate and moſt vncomfortable wildernes. Being caſt out of man, he is

Seeking reſt.

ſaid to ſeeke reſt, becauſe he is then moſt vexed, and moſt at diſquiet within himſelf, ſeeking by all meanes poſſible, to recouer that which he hath loſt. Heere then we are to learne that as ſoone as we are called by Chriſt his grace, that we are to looke for mighty temptations and heauy aſſaults, for the deuill will not ſo eaſily looſe his pray, as alſo we are with all circumſpection & warines, to ſet our ſelues againſt him, & to vſe all means to preuent his power, for his hatred is moſt deadly, and his fury & rage not ouercom by a little. Howbeit, this forewarning, ought not to breede any feare within our minds, or any whit to diſcourage vs, but rather to fore-ſhew vs what danger may fall vpon vs, through our owne negligence.

Seeking reſt,] If we wil giue him entertainment; but we muſt watch and keepe him out, & fight the ſpirituall fight, crauing Gods helpe by prayer, and vſing all good meanes. He hath reſt enough in the life of a wicked man, in the adulterer, the vnmercifull vſurer, the thiefe, the whore, he holdeth therein fee-ſimple, he taketh vp his lodging there for terme of life & longer to. Although he ſeeke reſt, yet he is neuer at reſt, for he goeth about like a roring Lyon,

ſeeking whō he may deuoure, he reſteth in them whom he hath gotten, and layeth garison to keep his hold,but ſtill as a conquerour he thirſteth after more,neither is he euer ſatisfied. God reſted the ſeauenth day from his works,but the deuill wil neuer reſt from his works. The godly that fight in this world with the deuil, and theyr ghoſtly enemies, though heere they haue a hard cōbate,and much vnquietnes, ſhall heereafter reſt from their labours,& enter into eternal reſt. Re.14.13. But the wicked which here haue eaſe,heereafter ſhall haue no reſt.

The third waighty conſideration in this parable,is the woful return of the vncleane ſpirit,in them that are not watchfull,& doe not their beſt endeuour to keepe him out, when they are once free from his thraldom and ſlauery. 3.

And when he findeth none,he ſaith,I wil return vnto mine houſe,whēce I cam out.] Wherin theſe circumſtances may be obſerued. Firſt our negligence & ſinfull & eaſie back-ſliding. And when he cōmeth,he findeth it empty ſwept & garniſhed.Secondly his cruelty in returning, in that he bringeth with him 7. other ſpirits, worſe thē himſelf. Thirdly, the wofull eſtate of that man or

His wofull returne.

woman,

woman, who forgetting God and themselues, haue yeelded themselues captiues to the deuils slauery. They enter in & dwel there. So the last state of that man is worse then the first. In which wofull case, for a restoratiue this may be added, that no man or woman despaire, if they be not vtterly past grace, though they fall againe, seeing there is a difference betwixt a resolute determination in sin, & a repentant mind, which is hartily sorry for euery fall and offence.

I will returne.] He saith not, I will seeke to returne, or I will doe my best endeuour to returne, but I will returne, as though nothing should resist him, and no power were able to vanquish and ouercome him. So cunning he is, that he hath his turnes & his returnes, his termes & his vacations, and he will come againe, although hee goe into a far Country, he is with vs before we are aware. When hee tolde Christ that all the Kingdoms of the earth were his to giue, yet it was nothing so, & likewise where he saith he wil returne, he is oft-times hindered, that hee cannot doe as he would, but few there be that keepe him out, and too many that through theyr negligence, giue him too easie an entrance.

Vnto my house whence I cam out.] First he commeth to the house, before he enterprize to come in. First he viewes the state of the man or woman, whether he or shee be returned to their old sinnes againe. And as houses be the habitations of men, so men themselues be often the deuils houses, for this is spoken by similitude and comparison.

But why should the deuill call the soule of man or woman, his owne house, or rather hee should say, I will enter into that house from whence I came. The soule of man & woman by creation, is Gods image, but the image of the deuill is the deformation of all; he vsurpes the possession of the soule of man, it is none of his by right. 1. Cor.6.20. For the soule & the body is the temple of God, and of his good spirit by right. 1.Cor.6.13.15.19. How then haue we by sinne, and the deuill by his temptations, made them dennes for theeues, & Cages for vncleane foules. If a Gentlewoman of high estate, should match with a vile & abiect slaue, although it did nothing concerne vs, would it not greeue any of vs to see it? so is the estate of thy soule, subiect to the slauery of the deuill. Or if a man had

married

maried a rich beautifull & noble gentlewoman, adorned with all gifts & graces, which may be deuised to be in a woman: and yet notwithstanding should so be sotted, & intangled with the loue of some foule & dishonest begger, or seruile maid of his house, as for her sake to abandon the company & frendship of the said wife; to spend his time in daliance & seruice of his base woman, to run, to goe, to stand at her appointment: to put all his liuing & reuenues into her hand, for her to consume & spoile at her pleasure, to deny her nothing, but to waite and serue her at a beck & at her call; yea, & to compel his said wife to doe the same: would ye not think this mans life miserable and most seruile? And surely the seruitude of our former sins, & the returne of our former euill life, is far more slauish and intollerable. For no woman, yea no creature in the world, is, or can be of that beauty or nobility, as the grace of Gods spirit is, to whō man by his creation was espoused, & to whō by forsaking his wicked life, & by repētance he had yeelded himself, which notwithstanding after a while we see abandoned, contemned, and reiected, as though there had beene no such couenant made, and all for the loue of

sensuality, and his former wicked delights, where-with he is bewitched, which are vtter enemies to the grace of God, and as a most deformed creature in respect of reason. In whose loue notwithstanding, or rather seruitude & sencelesse bondage, we see many so ouertaken & drowned, as that they serue their sensuality day & night, with all paines, perils, and expences, and doe constraine also, euen the good motions of Gods spirit, to giue place at euery beck & cōmandement, of this new mistres, or rather stepdame.

It is a greeuous euill, to be nourished, and to grow vp, & to be nusled in sinne. The child that is borne & bred vp in a dark prison, maketh the same reckning of darknes, as other doe of light; they that are borne slaues, & are vsed there-vnto, make little account of liberty; and they that know little of heauenly & eternal matters, embrace the delights of the world, & the filthines of sin, vain & transitory things, for tru & precious blessings, which endure for euer, counting a banished land as welcome to them, as their owne country. So many of the Iewes being bred & brought vp in the bondage of Ægipt, did not once so much as thinke of liberty. And out of such manner of people,

wholy giuen vp to ſinne, when the deuill once entred he neuer went out. But when the good ſpirit of God hath diſpoſſeſſed him, and caſt him out, by hearing the word preached, and by cauſing vs to harken and to obey good counſell, and good exhortation, then he may ſay, I will returne into my houſe from whence I came, if ſo be that I may find it ready for my turne, & that vpon new remembrance I may claime new acquaintance. And behold a ſhame it is to ſay it, and a ſorrow it is to think of it, he findeth the houſe ſwept & garniſhed fit and ready prepared for him. For a ſinfull ſoule is a ſwept houſe to him; and whē the good ſpirit is baniſhed, and ſo honourable a gueſt hath very ſlender & alſo vnreuerent entertainment, the deuill entreth againe as into his owne poſſeſſion, and claimes that houſe to be his owne by lawe, which he hath ſo good euidence to ſhew for. The neglect of Gods grace, is the deuils chiefe delight, and they that are deſtitute of Gods ſpirit, are fit to receaue the deuil. As for the godly and the faithfull, which are ſoundly and plentifully endued with Gods grace & holy ſpirit, they are ſo well fenced and prouided, that the deuil can finde no hole, or the

Swept.

least

least chink to enter in at. The house swept and garnished, is a similitude drawne from the vse and custome of men, whose chiefest delight is to haue all things handsome and neat, whē they are to entertain their friends. But vnto the deuil it is nothing so, for beastlines is the beauty and trimmed house that he delights in, & nothing pleaseth him but filthines, the lewd liuer, the drunken tosse-pot, that smels all of drink, the abhominable swearer, and bawdy talker, those are houses for him, and as a princely pallace. When we haue bid farwell to God and godlines, then are we fitte for him, and those be his roomes of choyce, when through the neglect of Gods grace, all good qualities are banished, and when we are thus banished from our selues. Wee prepare our house for God, by faith and repentance; contrariwise prouision is made for the deuil, when we think not of Gods iudgments, & when the feare of God is choked and smothered vp within vs. Da.13.9.

When he findeth a man or woman polluted in sinne, and defiled againe, and continuing in their former sinnes, whereof they haue repented, this is the house which is swept, and prepared for his comming, and

in such sort as he wold wish to giue him entertainment. It is not cleanlines, or hansomnes, or sweeping, or garnishing, where-with the deuil is delighted; the reason is, because he is an vnclean spirit, & his delight is in vncleanenes, & those men & women that are most vncleane, they are the onely hoasts to entertain so loathsom & so homely a guest. Whē the house is swept from all cleanenes, frō all godlines, honesty, & vertue, then is it swept as it shold be for him. This sweeping is wel expressed in the Scripture, by two similitudes, the first is, as when the Sow after washing hath walowed in mire, & is all dirty, then is she cōpared vnto that clean soule, which the deuil maketh choise of; the other similitude is, of the dogg that is returned to his owne vomit. 2. Pet. 2. 22.

Sweeping is not enough, paring with an iron instrument is more needfull. The former custome of sinne, sticks hard in thy remembrance, and a simple & bare confession of thy accustomed sinne, which may be compared vnto a slight sweeping, is not of that force, but that thy old custom wil bring in the deuill againe, and giue thy old Landlord his induction, into his new possession. Thou hadst need therefore to pare it away

with

with great sorrow & harty repentance, ioyning therto all diligence & watchfulnes, against the same, & especially and aboue the rest, crauing Gods helpe & assistance, that thou maist ouercome thy old euill custom. But deceaue not thy self in thy negligence, when thou doest these things for a shewe & fashion, confessing thy sinns in such sort as though thou hadst some other busines in hand, and in the meane time as one that is carelesse, thou liuest content without feare, laying thy head vpon thy pillow. Whereby it cōmeth to passe, that the deuill being as it were inuited into the house of thy soule, through thy euil custom, maketh hast and looketh not for a second bidding. See therfore that thou pluck vp thy euil weeds by the roote, & leaue no shew of the roote therof, in the ground of thy hart, if it be possible, least it take sap & strength, & grow vp again. And that thou mayst the better doe this, practise that vertue which is cōtrary to thy vice, which hath so mightily entangled thee; as sobriety in steed of drūkennes, chastity in steede of whoredome, humility in steede of pride, loue and charity in steede of slaunder and euill report, liberality in steed of vsury, oppression, and extortion,

and ſo in the like, giuing heede there-vnto with all painfulnes, circumſpection, and watchfulnes. For as the Æthiopian cannot change his skin,nor the Leopard his ſpots, ſo ſome are wholy giuen to ſinne, and can neuer returne, becauſe they will not. Hee that is vſed to wholſom meat,cannot brook that which is vnſauory; and the ſouldiour that is accuſtomed to eate horſe-fleſh, after a while can away with it well enough. So before we are giuen to a cuſtome of ſinne, it ſeemeth vgly and loathſome, but when once we are caught in the ſnare, & haue giuen our ſelues there-vnto, and haue had a pleaſant taſt therof,then we drink it down, as though it were ſweete vvine, and being once thus wedded, we are neuer purpoſed to be diuorced and to breake off. Come counſell,come threatnings, come perſwaſions,come puniſhments, afflictions,the diſpleaſure of God, the ſhame of the world, a guilty conſcience, the feare of death and of hell, all is one. Iron twice hardned, muſt needes be moſt durable. Wee are like the deafe Adder,which ſtoppeth her eares, and we will not be called, or if we be called, we will not be vvone, charme the charmer neuer ſo vviſely. The ſinner vvhen he is fallen

into the depth of sinne, then hee despiseth all warnings, and setteth very light by his best friendes. They regard not the grace of God, but receiue it in vaine, and take as great delight in theyr sinnes, as if they were possessed of heauen, and with the sow, they altogether delight to wallow in the mire.

Secondly, it is sayd, that hee founde the house from whence he came, empty. Mat. 12. 44. After we haue repented, we becom idle, and lie open, euen as open as Noah, & as carelesse as Lot. Giue no place to the deuill, Eph. 4. The idle giue roome enough, but they that are exercised in godly studies and labours, the deuill hath no place there. The children of Dan tooke Lais, the people being carelesse. Dauid was inticed to adultery, beeing idle. Many seeme to labour, and to be busied in a thousand matters, as though they had not so much leysure as to eate theyr meate, and yet theyr time is but idely spent, because it is onely in the affayres of this life, and not concerning that which is to come; all for the body, and little or nothing for the soule. Luke. 10. 42. Little children in making theyr toyes are meruailous busie, and we in these worldlie matters are too forward, and all to little purpose;

Emptie:

pose, because the care of heauenly things is so much forgotten, or at least-wise so slenderly regarded: beeing meruailous wise in our owne conceit, while we vnderstand nothing. God would haue the people of Israell to gather Manna, not to last a weeke, or a yeere, but for euery day. So must we cast of sloth, & labour continually in the works of our vocation, vntil the sabboth of rest & of glory come, so greatly desired of vs, where then most happily, we shal enioy the fruite of all our labours. Reuel. 14. 13. and this especially, that by our painfull labours, in all godly sort, we haue beene kept from committing great & many offences, which otherwise we might haue falne into, beeing preserued by Gods grace, and made able to liue in his feare, and in his seruice.

Thirdly. he findeth it garnished.] A bed orderly made, doth inuite vs to lye downe, & a faire & hansome house, doth prouoke vs to come in, and beeing entred, there to make our stay and abode. The garnishing of the house, is but an accidental ornament, and the occasions of sinne, are great intice-ments there-vnto. Therefore the Apostle willeth vs not onely to refraine from sinne, but euen to abstaine from all appearance of

euil. 1.Thes.5.22. Moses would not leaue a hoofe behind him. Exo. 10. and wee must auoyd euery little occasion: for the occasions of sin, are the ornaments of the house wherein the deuill delighteth to dwell, the occasions of sinne, are the deuils pledges, whereby hee hath an interest in vs. If thou hast repented thee of thy whoredome, retaine not thy whore, nor any iewell or token of hers, whereby thy minde may be intangled to come into the remembrance of her loue: for that is the deuils hooke and snare, whereby he mindeth to catch and intrap thee, and to lay sure hold on thee. The whore keepeth thy tokens, and presenteth them to thine eyes, to drawe thee into her loue againe. Leuit.8. Not onely the flesh of the heiffer, but his skin and entrailes, were cast out into an vncleane place. Deut. 7. God cõmaunded his people to ouerthrow the Altars of the Cananites, to breake theyr Images, to cut down their groues, to burne all the ornaments of theyr Idols, that there might no token of idolatry, nor any remẽbrance be left. Iehu tooke order, that all Bals priests, euery mother sonne should be slaine. Exo.33. Moses made the people to drink vp the ashes of their golden Calfe.

Occasions of sin must be auoided.

Many retaine the loue of the world, and the reliques of sinne, and are very loath, nay they wil not leaue them at all; theyr auncient euill custome remaines, wherby it commeth to passe, that miserably they fall, into the manifold inconueniences & great dangers of their former sinnes. Hee that flyeth not occasions, cannot auoyd sinne, and hee that loueth danger, shall perrish therein. This is that which our Sauiour Christ warneth. Mat, 18.9. It is better to enter into the kingdome of heauen halt & lame, then hauing two hands, or two feete, to be sent into hell fire. God commaunded King Saul to destroy Amalec, and to spare no liuing creature that was in his land, but hee saued Agag the king of the Amalekites aliue, & spared the Oxen and sheepe aliue, & therfore was hee cast out of his kingdome, and came to a miserable end. 1. Sam. 15. Why did God commaund the oxen and sheepe to be slaine? they were harmlesse creatures. The reason is, because they were the goods of those that were euill, and serued for their vse. So must we kill & extinguish not onely sin, but the occasions of sinne, that serue thereunto, and that draw vs to the same, & by fresh remēbrance prouoke vs to the per-

formance thereof. King Dauid prayed god that he would remooue from him the way of iniquitie. And Psal. 1. he pronounceth him blessed, that hath not stood in the way of sinners. And Salomon in his prouerbs, chap. 4. 14. giueth a charge, Enter not into the way of the wicked, and walke not in the way of euill men: auoyd it and goe not by, turne from it, and passe by.

A holy Father, S. Ambrose, dooth vvell note the prophets speech, in that he rather saith, Remoue the way of iniquitie, then remoue the iniquity it selfe: and because many should haue auoyded the sinne it selfe, if they had not entred into the way thereof. We read not of any great sin, that wise king Salomon committed, beside the multitude of his wiues, and his idolatry, for the which his posterity was depriued of the greatest part of his kingdom. But surely he had neuer falne into idolatry, if hee had auoyded the occasions thereof, and withstoode the bewitching temptations of his idolatrous wiues. He married outlandish wiues, of idolatrous Nations, and as hee doted vpon the women, so he could not auoid their strange inticements. The occasions were so great inforcements thereunto, that his wisedome

could not preuent it. Which occasions had they not beene so forcible, God would neuer haue giuen that forwarning as he did in his lawe. Deut. 7. 17. Neyther shal he take him many wiues, least his hart turne away (from the law of GOD,) 1. Kings. 11. 4. Not onely the King, but the people also vvere debarred from marrying with idolatrous nations, least they should entice them to idolatry, as the daughters of Moab, by this meanes brought them to theyr shame. Numb. 25. 1. 2. and were the death of three and twenty thousand of the Israelites. 1. Cor. 10. 8.

The deuils crueltie.

Then goeth he, and taketh to him seuen spirits worse then himselfe.] The second thing in his wofull returne, was his crueltie, seeking the vtter destruction of him whom hee recouereth, and hath drawne into his snares. And how should not hee be vtterlie destroyed, which hath so great a company to come against him. Who when hee had enough, and more then hee could doe, of himselfe to be deliuered but of one vnclean spirit, in what distresse & lamentable estate shall he be, when seuen such vncleane spirits enter possession within him, and seuen worse then the former?

The

The number of seauen, is taken for an vncertaine number, for he bringeth manie more, and sometimes a whole legion come together. These spirits are worse then him selfe, because the latter sinnes are far worse then the former. Thys is a foule blotte of ingratitude in him or her, that falleth once and twice, and againe and often into his former iniquities, which hee hath by Gods grace so greatly detested: yea, and vowed the contrary.

But as no man pittieth him who hath taken losse vpon the seas, if hee aduenture againe, and suffer shypwracke, beeing in a manner brought to vtter pouertie before: so none lightly vvill haue compassion on them, vvho are nowe cast away through theyr owne folly and negligence, & whom no vvarning will serue to take heed of their future miseries.

Thus beeing iustlie forsaken of all pitty and compassion, the deuill he vvill be sure to shewe them none. But as GOD and the Angels of heauen delight at the saluation of a sinner, so the deuill reioyceth at nothing more then at theyr destruction: for thys is his bootie and his pray, and his chiefest tryumph.

pose, because the care of heauenly things is so much forgotten, or at least-wise so slenderly regarded: beeing meruailous wise in our owne conceit, while we vnderstand nothing. God would haue the people of Israell to gather Manna, not to last a weeke, or a yeere, but for euery day. So must we cast of sloth, & labour continually in the works of our vocation, vntil the sabboth of rest & of glory come, so greatly desired of vs, where then most happily, we shal enioy the fruite of all our labours. Reuel. 14. 13. and this especially, that by our painfull labours, in all godly sort, we haue beene kept from committing great & many offences, which otherwise we might haue falne into, beeing preserued by Gods grace, and made able to liue in his feare, and in his seruice.

Thirdly, he findeth it garnished.] A bed orderly made, doth inuite vs to lye downe, & a faire & hansome house, doth prouoke vs to come in, and beeing entred, there to make our stay and abode. The garnishing of the house, is but an accidental ornament, and the occasions of sinne, are great intice-ments there-vnto. Therefore the Apostle willeth vs not onely to refraine from sinne, but euen to abstaine from all appearance of

euil. 1.Thes.5.22. Moses would not leaue a hoofe behind him. Exo. 10. and wee must auoyd euery little occasion: for the occasions of sin, are the ornaments of the house wherein the deuill delighteth to dwell, the occasions of sinne, are the deuils pledges, whereby hee hath an interest in vs. If thou hast repented thee of thy whoredome, retaine not thy whore, nor any iewell or token of hers, whereby thy minde may be intangled to come into the remembrance of her loue: for that is the deuils hooke and snare, whereby he mindeth to catch and intrap thee, and to lay sure hold on thee. The whore keepeth thy tokens, and presenteth them to thine eyes, to drawe thee into her loue againe. Leuit.8. Not onely the flesh of the heiffer, but his skin and entrailes, were cast out into an vncleane place. Deut. 7. God cōmaunded his people to ouerthrow the Altars of the Cananites, to breake theyr Images, to cut down their groues, to burne all the ornaments of theyr Idols, that there might no token of idolatry, nor any remēbrance be left. Iehu tooke order, that all Bals priests, euery mother sonne should be slaine. Exo.33. Moses made the people to drink vp the ashes of their golden Calfe.

Occasions of sin must be auoided.

Many retaine the loue of the world, and the reliques of ſinne,and are very loath, nay they wil not leaue them at all; theyr auncient euill cuſtome remaines, wherby it commeth to paſſe, that miſerably they fall, into the manifold inconueniences & great dangers of their former ſinnes. Hee that flyeth not occaſions, cannot auoyd ſinne, and hee that loueth danger, ſhall perriſh therein. This is that which our Sauiour Chriſt warneth. Mat,18.9. It is better to enter into the kingdome of heauen halt & lame, then hauing two hands, or two feete, to be ſent into hell fire. God commaunded King Saul to deſtroy Amalec. and to ſpare no liuing creature that was in his land, but hee ſaued Agag the king of the Amalekites aliue, & ſpared the Oxen and ſheepe aliue, & therfore was hee caſt out of his kingdome, and came to a miſerable end. 1.Sam.15. Why did God commaund the oxen and ſheepe to be ſlaine? they were harmleſſe creatures. The reaſon is, becauſe they were the goods of thoſe that were euill, and ſerued for their vſe. So muſt we kill & extinguiſh not onely ſin, but the occaſions of ſinne, that ſerue thereunto, and that draw vs to the ſame, & by freſh remēbrance prouoke vs to the performance

formance thereof. King Dauid prayed god that he would remooue from him the way of iniquitie. And Psal. 1. he pronounceth him blessed, that hath not stood in the way of sinners. And Salomon in his prouerbs, chap. 4. 14. giueth a charge, Enter not into the way of the wicked, and walke not in the way of euill men: auoyd it and goe not by, turne from it, and passe by.

A holy Father, S. Ambrose, dooth vvell note the prophets speech, in that he rather saith, Remoue the way of iniquitie, then remoue the iniquity it selfe: and because many should haue auoyded the sinne it selfe, if they had not entred into the way thereof. We read not of any great sin, that wise king Salomon committed, beside the multitude of his wiues, and his idolatry, for the which his posterity was depriued of the greatest part of his kingdom. But surely he had neuer falne into idolatry, if hee had auoyded the occasions thereof, and withstoode the bewitching temptations of his idolatrous wiues. He married outlandish wiues, of idolatrous Nations, and as hee doted vpon the women, so he could not auoid their strange inticements. The occasions were so great inforcements thereunto, that his wisedome

could not preuent it. Which occasions had they not beene so forcible, God would neuer haue giuen that forwarning as he did in his lawe. Deut. 7. 17. Neyther shal he take him many wiues, least his hart turne away (from the law of GOD,) 1. Kings. 11. 4. Not onely the King, but the people also vvere debarred from marrying with idolatrous nations, least they should entice them to idolatry, as the daughters of Moab, by this meanes brought them to theyr shame. Numb. 25. 1. 2. and were the death of three and twenty thousand of the Israelites. 1. Cor. 10. 8.

The deuils crueltie.

Then goeth he, and taketh to him seuen spirits worse then himselfe.] The second thing in his wofull returne, was his crueltie, seeking the vtter destruction of him whom hee recouereth, and hath drawne into his snares. And how should not hee be vtterlie destroyed, which hath so great a company to come against him. Who when hee had enough, and more then hee could doe, of himselfe to be deliuered but of one vnclean spirit, in what distresse & lamentable estate shall he be, when seuen such vncleane spirits enter possession within him, and seuen worse then the former?

The number of seauen, is taken for an vncertaine number, for he bringeth manie more, and sometimes a whole legion come together. These spirits are worse then him selfe, because the latter sinnes are far worse then the former. Thys is a foule blotte of ingratitude in him or her, that falleth once and twice, and againe and often into his former iniquities, which hee hath by Gods grace so greatly detested: yea, and vowed the contrary.

But as no man pittieth him who hath taken losse vpon the seas, if hee aduenture againe, and suffer shypwracke, beeing in a manner brought to vtter pouertie before: so none lightly vvill haue compassion on them, vvho are nowe cast away through theyr owne folly and negligence, & whom no vvarning will serue to take heed of their future miseries.

Thus beeing iustlie forsaken of all pitty and compassion, the deuill he vvill be sure to shewe them none. But as GOD and the Angels of heauen delight at the saluation of a sinner, so the deuill reioyceth at nothing more then at theyr destruction: for thys is his bootie and his pray, and his chiefest tryumph.

As nothing delighteth God so much as mercie, so nothing delighteth the deuill so much as crueltie. And to shewe foorth his cruell disposition and nature herein, hee is well resembled to the most cruell beastes that are. As to a Dragon. Reuel. 13. that great Dragon, to a Serpent, whose poyson and sting is most deadly, Gene. 3. To a roaring Lyon, who with open mouth seeketh to deuoure. 1. Pet. 5. 8. Hee knoweth that himselfe alone, is able to work the destruction of any whom God forsaketh, but hee thinks hee cannot sufficiently performe his rage and fury, vnlesse hee bring companie enow, as though he should make an end & consume the sinner all at once.

His chiefest mischiefe is in accusing vs before God; he tempteth vs to sin, & when we haue committed it, he leaues vs to our selues, & to Gods displeasure, looking still for our finall destruction; which if wee be not made pertakers of Gods mercie, shall then appeare, when the soule parteth from the body, and when it shall be brought to the tribunall seat of Gods iudgement, there to giue account. 2. Cor. 5. Reu. 13. 10.

And. &c. And they enter in & dwell there.] They that are fallne from the grace of God, are

twice

twice more subiect to the deuils rage then they were before, and now he hath greater libertie then euer hee had, and takes more surer hold: So that it is in a manner impossible to throw him out; but if wee may obtaine that he may be throwne out, yet doth he leaue behind him seuen worse then himselfe. This shall prooue to be a iust punishment for our negligence, and God giueth them vp to sathans crueltie, who thus deserue to be forsaken. The deuill is sayde to dwell in our soule, when he entreth therein by his most powerfull temptations: wherfore, let them that are once clensed, deliuered and freed from him, consider what maner of guest they were troubled withall, & also how crafty a companion hee is, which knoweth our frailties, how and which way to creep within vs, and to recouer a second possession. And if the way doe not lie manifestly open for him, hee is not to learne howe to vndermine vs. Let vs endeuour therefore that Christ may raigne within vs by his holy Spirit, that so all passages may be stopt, and that the deuill may not enter, nor gette any holdfast of vs. For let his assaults be neuer so fierce, and his craft and subtiltie neuer so secrete and vndermining,

yet

yet can hee not preuaile against the godlie, whom Gods grace dooth alwayes keepe in safety. And we knowe that this heauy punishment is denounced, and also reserued to the contemners of Gods grace, vvhose mindes beeing vtterly darkned, & all care of godlines beeing trode vnder foote, doe wexe more prophane then Infidels & heathens.

So the last state of that man, is worse then the first.] This is the vvofull state of that man or woman, who forgetting God and themselues, haue yeelded themselues captiues to the deuils slauery. And thys falleth out true, according to Christ his wordes, which hee spake to the man that had beene diseased eyght and thirtie yeeres, and nowe had beene recouered, Ioh. 5. 14. Sinne no more, least a worse thing come vnto thee. Sin no more so notoriously or so presumptuously: for in one sin God may take thee and punish thee for all, and take heed least thou be plagued with som strange punishment, as was threatned to the Israelites. Leu. 26. 18. that they should be punished seuen times more, according to their sinnes. Deu. 28. 59. The Lorde vvill make thy plagues wonderfull, and the plagues of thy seede,

euen

euen great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore diseases, and of long durance. Moreouer, hee will bring vpon thee all the diseases of Egipt, whereof thou wast afraid, and they shall cleaue vnto thee. The like in a manner hath the prophet Dauid. Psal. 68. 21. God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairie scalpe of such a one, as goeth on still in his wickednes. Sinne no more, thy former sinnes were blotted out of Gods remembrance through thy repentance, why wilt thou set thy sinnes againe before God, and renue the remembrance of them, that thou maist be punished for the new and the old together. Hebr. 3. 12. Let vs take heede, least there be in anie of vs, an euill hart and vnfaithfull, to depart away from the liuing God, and great neede wee haue to exhort one another daily, least we should be hardned through the deceitfulnes of sinne, and so be vtterly debarred from entring into Gods rest. It is a fearefull thing to fall into the hands of GOD; for hee is a consuming fire. Hebr. 12. 29. For if vvee sinne vvillingly and resolutelie, after God hath graunted vs his grace, and if we extinguish the same vtterlie, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sinne, but a feare-

fearefull looking for of iudgement, accompanied with the distrust of Gods mercy, & with the trembling fore-thought of eternal condemnation; beeing continually vexed with the torment of an euill conscience, to be ready to fall into despaire euery howre. 1. Tim. 1. 9. A worse thing shall fall vpon thee, not only in regard of worldly punishments, but of euerlasting torments. If wee encline vnto wickednes with our hart, the Lord will not heare vs. Psalme. 66. 16. and Psal. 125. 5. Yea, as for such as turne backe vnto theyr owne wickednes, the Lord shal lead them forth with euill dooers. Reu. 22. 14. 15. Psal. 9. 17. The wicked shal be turned into hell, and all the people that forget GOD.

How miserable this estate is, it might be amplified by setting downe what our first estate is by creation, and what wee are by nature, euen the chyldren of Gods vvrath and displeasure. Eph. 2. How we haue been holpen by grace, and nowe fallne away by wilfull negligence, and being hardned euerie day more and more in sin, doe grow to a desperate resolution. Most needful therfore is the counsell of the Apostle, 1. Thes. 5. as wee are willed to reioyce euer-more,

because

because God hath done so great things for vs, as to deliuer vs from the vncleane Spirit, and that God by his goodnes, Psal. 51. 10. hath made vs a cleane hart, and renued a right spirit within vs; so to pray continually for Gods grace, that we may not be ouerthrowne: for of our selues we are not able to stand. Let vs for this and all other Gods benefits, bee still mindfull to giue thanks, and especially we are to take heede, that we doe not extinguish the good spirit of God, & quench the force thereof, which is the liuelie and vitall spirit of the soule.

Second falls there are of infirmitie, the which the godly are sorry for, & rise againe by repentance & amendement; and second falls there are of resolution, with the delight of former sin and wickednes, in that man or woman whose hart is nowe wholie separated from God, and shall neuer rise againe. That sick man that hath recouered his health, and falleth into his sicknes again, the strength of his sicknesse is greater, because the power of his nature is weaker: so the second time of our falling, the deuill taketh more hold, and more aduantage, and we proue to be more weake to resist, partly through the guiltinesse of our conscience Falls.

condemning vs, & our sinful nature drawing vs, and betraying vs more and more. Ecclus. 34. 26. 27. Hee that washeth himselfe, because of a dead body, and toucheth it againe, what auaileth his washing: So is it with a man that fasteth for his sinnes, & cōmitteth them againe, who will heare his prayer, or what doth his fasting helpe him? We cannot know how farre worse the latter sinnes are then the former, vntill vvee know how bad the former are. The former deserue the displeasure of God, & the losse of his fauour; & surely the second deserue the losse of euerlasting life, and eternall punishments in hell. When we forsake God, and prefer sinne before his seruice, and before a holy life, then hee leaueth vs to our selues, & departeth from vs. And as in his presence is the fulnes of all ioyes, so in his absence is the miserie and distresse of all vvoes.

If thou shouldest take into thy house a dishonest, foule, and sluttish woman, and set her at the vpper end of thy table, & cōmaund thy wife to serue and to waite, how would shee beare this reprochfull iniury? Would she not rightly complaine on thee, and had shee not iust cause to forsake thee

and

and thine house? Iacob departed from Laban, because his countenance was changed towards him. Whē God hath left our soule, all the deuils and all the creatures rise vp against it, being left desolate, voyd, and forsaken of Gods help and direction. Psal. 3. 2. According to that in the psalm, God hath forsaken him, persecute and take him, because there is none to deliuer him. Therefore the prophet prayeth. Psal. 51. 11. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me. VVhen the King leaueth his Court, all goe with him, and when God departeth from the soule, all his blessings goe after, neyther doe they stay behind. As if they should say, God is not in thys place, in this man, or this vvoman, therefore let vs depart hence and be gone.

Ezech. 3. 20. If a righteous man turne from his righteousnesse, and commit iniquitie, I will lay a stumbling block before him, and hee shall die. Hee that hath gone the right way, and hath turned backe with resolution, or vpon presumption, I wil giue him vp into a reprobate minde. Againe, chap. 18. 24. If the righteous turne away from his righteousnes & commit iniquity, and

and do according to all the abhominations that the wicked man doth, shal he liue? All his righteousnes that hee hath doone, shall not be mentioned, but in his transgression that he hath committed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Were it not great follie in that man, which had brought great treasure from a far country, with his owne danger and hazard, that hee should venture all at the throwe of a Die, which hee hath laboured so painfully for: and shall we, for a little pleasure of sin, lose all the hope of a vertuous life, & runne into so great danger as may follow there-after? Yea, wee shall shewe our selues farre more mad, for he that hath lost his treasure, may vndertake the iourney, and bring as much more againe. But the presumptuous sinner, GOD forsaketh him, and sildome or neuer doth helpe him. The deuill tempteth, man consenteth and obeyeth, & God forsaketh. Such a one shalbe like vnto Lots wife, that was turned into a piller of salt, & the earth which is sowed with salt, can bring foorth no fruite. Of turning of Lots wife into salt, Maister Doctor *Babington* writeth very effectually in his comfortable notes on Genesis, to this present purpose.

When

When Zedekiah was taken, his eyes were put out, and hee was led into captiuity; so whē the deuil taketh vs the second time, he blindeth the eyes of our mind, and keepeth vs in continual bondage, vntil the time doe come, that he may thrust vs into hell. That shippe which is without a guide, goeth not where it were best, but where the tempest enforceth it: So that man or woman which is destitute of Gods grace, doth not that which is meete and conuenient, but that which the deuil tempteth thē vnto, leading them along, with sweete and sugred baites. If one onely offence of our first parents, brought so great mischiefe vnto all mankind, how much more dangerous shall our manifold, & daily, and hainous offences be. The light of nature doth shew vnto vs, the dishonesty and shame of sinne, because it makes vs to be noted and pointed at. For this cause we hide our selues, & would not be seene or knowne, perceauing well, how great honour & credite we loose by sinne, and that thereby we fall into publique disgrace and discredit.

I let passe the wofull punishment after this life, and think good to make mention of those griping sorrowes, where-with an

euill conſcience is tormented in this life.
End. First, the end of ſinne is dolefull, and hath
The ſting ſuch a ſting with it, that it often-times brin-
of conſci- geth deſpaire vnto the party, that for want
ence. of Gods grace and true repentance, groun-
ded vppon the promiſes of Gods ſweete and euerlaſting mercies, they become the lamentable executioners of them-ſelues. The ſting of thy conſcience is a ſharpe thorne, and as a dagger to ſtab thee at the hart. The ſound of feare is alwayes in thy eares, and when thou thinkeſt of peace, thē treaſon is toward thee, and when thy body would take reſt, thy reſtleſſe mind will ſuffer no ſleepe. When Ammon defiled his ſiſter, his conſcience abhorred the deede, and his ſiſter was loathſome vnto him. Iudas the Traytour, when he had ſolde his Maiſter, his guilty conſcience neuer reſted, vntill it had brought his damned body to a
Shame. ſhamefull death. The ſecond torment of a guiltie conſcience, is vvorldly ſhame. That woman that hath a ſpotte in her face, is alwayes deſirous to hide it, but being beautifull and faire, ſhee reioyceth to be ſeene. Adam getteth Figge leaues to couer his ſhame, and afterward hideth himſelfe out of ſight. Dauid, would hide his adultery,

by

by ſending for Vriah home to his houſe, that he might take her home vnto him, and lie with her, and to this intent hee ſendeth him delicate fare, to prouoke him to luſt, all which when hee refuſed, and nothing would ſerue, he ſent him into the vvarre to be ſlaine.

The thirde torment of an euill conſcience, is the reſtleſſe feare of puniſhment in the vvorlde to come, which the diſtruſtfull minde, by the light of reaſon, and guilt of ſinne, and the threatnings of Gods lawe doth fore-caſt; ſo that wee neede not eyther Scripture to prooue it, or fayth to perſwade it, ſeeing that GOD is a iuſt Iudge, and ſendeth puniſhments in this vvorld, as fore-runners of the puniſhmentes in the world to come. The wicked man is alwaies fearefull and diſtruſtfull, and leades a life without comfort. He flyeth when no man purſueth him, Pro. 28. The thiefe flyeth at euery leaſt ſuſpition. The Viper is not killed with his owne poyſon, but ſinne deſtroyeth that conſcience, wherein it enhabiteth, it rayſeth vp feares, and prouoketh to deſpaire.

Feare of puniſhment.

The laſt ſtate of that man that is fallen into ſinne agayne, not ſo much of infir-

The last state worse in three respects.

mity, as of delight and purpose, & continuance in sinne, is worse then the first in three respects. First, in respect of the deuill. Secondly, in respect of the sinner himselfe: and thirdly, in respect of God. In respect of the deuil, because he handleth him more cruelly, and watcheth him more narrowly, giuing him no liberty, nor scope to escape. The Iaylour fearing not his prisoner, giueth him some liberty, but if he escape and returne againe, he layeth on double fetters, looking to him day and night, least eyther he should file his irons in sunder, or breake prison. In like case, the deuill hauing vs within his compasse, he takes little thought and care, perswading himselfe that we are sure enough: Well, by Gods help and by his grace and goodnes we escape his hands, we are freed from his thraldom, and set him at defiance, and find in our selues, a meruailous readines and cheerefulnes there-vnto. But if thou beest so vnhappy, as to fall into his thraldom againe, then is thy second misery worse then the first; then wil he lay on load of irons, and watch euery instant, and at euery turne. Where, before he offered thee a few temptations, he wil now practise a thousand wayes, he will lay many stum-

In respect of the deuill.

bling

bling blockes before thee, and shut vp all passages,& keepe thee very straightly. For if the cōpany of the godly, were the means to deliuer thee out of his prison, and so rescue thee,he will so prouide,that thou shalt shun, yea by little and little hate their company,and so will he harden thy hart,against all good counsaile & perswasions. If preaching of the word did with-draw thy hart from him,and win thee vnto God,now wil hee haue dainty deuices of pleasures, and worldly baites enow, that thou shalt not be able to escape his hooke: And by these meanes wil he shut vp all passages; and the Castle being taken again,he wil set a stronger garrison, and bring with him seauen other spirits, worse then himselfe, who after they haue entred,wil dwell there,and make their continuall aboade.

Secondly, in respect of the sinner himselfe, his last state shall be woorse then the first. He wil grow from worse to worse,vntill there be no recouery: the second disgrace will make him contemne all good meanes, and bring him to be past shame. Like vnto the man that hath the disease of the Lethargie,whom neither talke,nor striking,nor pinching,shal keepe waking. The

In respect of the sinner.

fearefull looking for of iudgement, accompanied with the distrust of Gods mercy, & with the trembling fore-thought of eternal condemnation; beeing continually vexed with the torment of an euill conscience, to be ready to fall into despaire euery howre. 1. Tim. 1. 9. A worse thing shall fall vpon thee, not only in regard of worldly punishments, but of euerlasting torments. If wee encline vnto wickednes with our hart, the Lord will not heare vs. Psalme. 66. 16. and Psal. 125. 5. Yea, as for such as turne backe vnto theyr owne wickednes, the Lord shal lead them forth with euill dooers. Reu. 22. 14. 15. Psal. 9. 17. The wicked shal be turned into hell, and all the people that forget GOD.

How miserable this estate is, it might be amplified by setting downe what our first estate is by creation, and what wee are by nature, euen the chyldren of Gods vvrath and displeasure. Eph. 2. How we haue been holpen by grace, and nowe fallne away by wilfull negligence, and being hardned euerie day more and more in sin, doe grow to a desperate resolution. Most needful therfore is the counsell of the Apostle, 1. Thes. 5. as wee are willed to reioyce euer-more,

because

because God hath done so great things for vs, as to deliuer vs from the vncleane Spirit, and that God by his goodnes, Psal. 51. 10. hath made vs a cleane hart, and renued a right spirit within vs; so to pray continually for Gods grace, that we may not be ouerthrowne: for of our selues we are not able to stand. Let vs for this and all other Gods benefits, bee still mindfull to giue thanks, and especially we are to take heede, that we doe not extinguish the good spirit of God, & quench the force thereof, which is the liuelie and vitall spirit of the soule.

Second falls there are of infirmitie, the which the godly are sorry for, & rise againe by repentance & amendement; and second falls there are of resolution, with the delight of former sin and wickednes, in that man or woman whose hart is nowe wholie separated from God, and shall neuer rise againe. That sick man that hath recouered his health, and falleth into his sicknes again, the strength of his sicknesse is greater, because the power of his nature is weaker: so the second time of our falling, the deuill taketh more hold, and more aduantage, and we proue to be more weake to resist, partly through the guiltinesse of our conscience Falls.

condemning vs, & our sinful nature drawing vs, and betraying vs more and more. Ecclus. 34. 26. 27. Hee that washeth himselfe, because of a dead body, and toucheth it againe, what auaileth his washing: So is it with a man that fasteth for his sinnes, & cōmitteth them againe, who will heare his prayer, or what doth his fasting helpe him? We cannot know how farre worse the latter sinnes are then the former, vntill vvee know how bad the former are. The former deserue the displeasure of God, & the losse of his fauour; & surely the second deserue the losse of euerlasting life, and eternall punishments in hell. When we forsake God, and prefer sinne before his seruice, and before a holy life, then hee leaueth vs to our selues, & departeth from vs. And as in his presence is the fulnes of all ioyes, so in his absence is the miserie and distresse of all vvoes.

If thou shouldest take into thy house a dishonest, foule, and sluttish woman, and set her at the vpper end of thy table, & cōmaund thy wife to serue and to waite, how would shee beare this reprochfull iniury? Would she not rightly complaine on thee, and had shee not iust cause to forsake thee

and thine house? Iacob departed from Laban, because his countenance was changed towards him. Whē God hath left our soule, all the deuils and all the creatures rise vp against it, being left desolate, voyd, and forsaken of Gods help and direction. Psal. 3. 2. According to that in the psalm, God hath forsaken him, persecute and take him, because there is none to deliuer him. Therefore the prophet prayeth. Psal. 51. 11. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me. VVhen the King leaueth his Court, all goe with him, and when God departeth from the soule, all his blessings goe after, neyther doe they stay behind. As if they should say, God is not in thys place, in this man, or this vvoman, therefore let vs depart hence and be gone.

Ezech. 3. 20. If a righteous man turne from his righteousnesse, and commit iniquitie, I will lay a stumbling block before him, and hee shall die. Hee that hath gone the right way, and hath turned backe with resolution, or vpon presumption, I wil giue him vp into a reprobate minde. Againe, chap. 18. 24. If the righteous turne away from his righteousnes & commit iniquity,

and

and do according to all the abhominations that the wicked man doth, ſhal he liue? All his righteouſnes that hee hath doone, ſhall not be mentioned, but in his tranſgreſſion that he hath committed, and in his ſin that he hath ſinned, in them ſhall he die. Were it not great follie in that man, which had brought great treaſure from a far country, with his owne danger and hazard, that hee ſhould venture all at the throwe of a Die, which hee hath laboured ſo painfully for: and ſhall we, for a little pleaſure of ſin, loſe all the hope of a vertuous life, & runne into ſo great danger as may follow there-after? Yea, wee ſhall ſhewe our ſelues farre more mad, for he that hath loſt his treaſure, may vndertake the iourney, and bring as much more againe. But the preſumptuous ſinner, GOD forſaketh him, and ſildome or neuer doth helpe him. The deuill tempteth, man conſenteth and obeyeth, & God forſaketh. Such a one ſhalbe like vnto Lots wife, that was turned into a piller of ſalt, & the earth which is ſowed with ſalt, can bring foorth no fruite. Of turning of Lots wife into ſalt, Maiſter Doctor *Babington* writeth very effectually in his comfortable notes on Geneſis, to this preſent purpoſe.

When

When Zedekiah was taken, his eyes were put out, and hee was led into captiuity; so whē the deuil taketh vs the second time, he blindeth the eyes of our mind, and keepeth vs in continual bondage, vntil the time doe come, that he may thrust vs into hell. That shippe which is without a guide, goeth not where it were best, but where the tempest enforceth it: So that man or woman which is destitute of Gods grace, doth not that which is meete and conuenient, but that which the deuil tempteth thē vnto, leading them along, with sweete and sugred baites. If one onely offence of our first parents, brought so great mischiefe vnto all mankind, how much more dangerous shall our manifold, & daily, and hainous offences be. The light of nature doth shew vnto vs, the dishonesty and shame of sinne, because it makes vs to be noted and pointed at. For this cause we hide our selues, & would not be seene or knowne, perceauing well, how great honour & credite we loose by sinne, and that thereby we fall into publique disgrace and discredit.

I let passe the wofull punishment after this life, and think good to make mention of those griping sorrowes, where-with an

euill conſcience is tormented in this life. First, the end of ſinne is dolefull, and hath ſuch a ſting with it, that it often-times bringeth deſpaire vnto the party, that for want of Gods grace and true repentance, grounded vppon the promiſes of Gods ſweete and euerlaſting mercies, they become the lamentable executioners of them-ſelues. The ſting of thy conſcience is a ſharpe thorne, and as a dagger to ſtab thee at the hart. The ſound of feare is alwayes in thy eares, and when thou thinkeſt of peace, thē treaſon is toward thee, and when thy body would take reſt, thy reſtleſſe mind will ſuffer no ſleepe. When Ammon defiled his ſiſter, his conſcience abhorred the deede, and his ſiſter was loathſome vnto him. Iudas the Traytour, when he had ſolde his Maiſter, his guilty conſcience neuer reſted, vntill it had brought his damned body to a ſhamefull death. The ſecond torment of a guiltie conſcience, is vvorldly ſhame. That woman that hath a ſpotte in her face, is alwayes deſirous to hide it, but being beautifull and faire, ſhee reioyceth to be ſeene. Adam getteth Figge leaues to couer his ſhame, and afterward hideth himſelfe out of ſight. Dauid, would hide his adultery,

End.

The ſting of conſcience.

Shame.

by

by sending for Vriah home to his house, that he might take her home vnto him, and lie with her, and to this intent hee sendeth him delicate fare, to prouoke him to lust, all which when hee refused, and nothing would serue, he sent him into the vvarre to be slaine.

The thirde torment of an euill conscience, is the restlesse feare of punishment in the vvorlde to come, which the distrustfull minde, by the light of reason, and guilt of sinne, and the threatnings of Gods lawe doth fore-cast; so that wee neede not eyther Scripture to prooue it, or fayth to perswade it, seeing that GOD is a iust Iudge, and sendeth punishments in this vvorld, as fore-runners of the punishmentes in the world to come. The wicked man is alwaies fearefull and distrustfull, and leades a life without comfort. He flyeth when no man pursueth him, Pro. 28. The thiefe flyeth at euery least suspition. The Viper is not killed with his owne poyson, but sinne destroyeth that conscience, wherein it enhabiteth, it rayseth vp feares, and prouoketh to despaire.

Feare of punishment.

The last state of that man that is fallen into sinne agayne, not so much of infirmity,

The last ſtate worſe in three reſpects.

mity, as of delight and purpoſe, & continuance in ſinne, is worſe then the firſt in three reſpects. Firſt, in reſpect of the deuill. Secondly, in reſpect of the ſinner himſelfe: and thirdly, in reſpect of God. In reſpect of the deuil, becauſe he handleth him more cruelly, and watcheth him more narrowly, giuing him no liberty, nor ſcope to eſcape. The Iaylour fearing not his priſoner, giueth him ſome liberty, but if he eſcape and returne againe, he layeth on double fetters, looking to him day and night, leaſt eyther he ſhould file his irons in ſunder, or breake priſon. In like caſe, the deuill hauing vs within his compaſſe, he takes little thought and care, perſwading himſelfe that we are ſure enough: Well, by Gods help and by his grace and goodnes we eſcape his hands, we are freed from his thraldom, and ſet him at defiance, and find in our ſelues, a meruailous readines and cheerefulnes there-vnto. But if thou beeſt ſo vnhappy, as to fall into his thraldom againe, then is thy ſecond miſery worſe then the firſt; then wil he lay on load of irons, and watch euery inſtant, and at euery turne. Where, before he offered thee a few temptations, he wil now practiſe a thouſand wayes, he will lay many ſtum-

In reſpect of the deuill.

bling

bling blockes before thee, and ſhut vp all paſſages,& keepe thee very ſtraightly. For if the cōpany of the godly, were the means to deliuer thee out of his priſon, and ſo reſcue thee,he will ſo prouide,that thou ſhalt ſhun, yea by little and little hate their company,and ſo will he harden thy hart,againſt all good counſaile & perſwaſions. If preaching of the word did with-draw thy hart from him,and win thee vnto God,now wil hee haue dainty deuices of pleaſures, and worldly baites enow, that thou ſhalt not be able to eſcape his hooke: And by theſe meanes wil he ſhut vp all paſſages; and the Caſtle being taken again,he wil ſet a ſtronger garriſon, and bring with him ſeauen other ſpirits, worſe then himſelfe, who after they haue entred,wil dwell there,and make their continuall aboade.

Secondly, in reſpect of the ſinner himſelfe, his laſt ſtate ſhall be woorſe then the firſt. He wil grow from worſe to worſe,vntill there be no recouery: the ſecond diſgrace will make him contemne all good meanes, and bring him to be paſt ſhame. Like vnto the man that hath the diſeaſe of the Lethargie,whom neither talke,nor ſtriking,nor pinching,ſhal keepe waking. The

In reſpect of the ſinner.

ſinner falling into the depth of ſinne, contemneth all good perſwaſions, counſailes, and godly inſpirations. Prouerb. 18. And his hart is become like the face of a harlot, that cannot bluſh, his hart will not relent, neither is there any remorce. Iere. 3. And then who will goe about to waſh the black Moore, and to make his skin white, & who will come neere that Sow, which is nothing elſe but all dirt ouer.

In reſpect of God.

Thirdly, in reſpect of God, the laſt ſtate of the ſinner is worſe then the firſt. Becauſe that ſinner is ſo much the more left of God, who returneth to his former ſinnes againe, like the dogg to his vomite, and God doth take the leſſe care about his ſaluation. The Phiſition that hath healed the ſicke body, giues him a charge, and preſcribes an order of diet, willeth him to auoid groſſe meates, marriſh fowles, fiſh, and other hurtfull meates, which may impaire his health. But the Phiſition being out of ſight, if hee follow his hurtfull appetite, and fall into his ſicknes againe, the Phiſition being ſent for, is loath to meddle with him, and giues him vp to himſelfe, and makes him an aunſwere of deniall, leaueth him as one deſpairing of his health, ſeeing him ſo careleſſe and ſo

witlesse, that hee cannot tell what is good for himselfe, and whom no counsell can make to beware, and to looke to himselfe. Euen so God dealeth with that sinner, that hauing beene often pardoned, and often cleansed, yet will run headlong into his former sinnes againe, he then leaueth him to himselfe; & whom God forsaketh, the deuill lieth in waite for, as the Woolfe deuoureth that sheepe which is without a Sheepheard. Therefore the Lord speaketh iustly by his Prophet Ieremie. chap. 51. Wee would haue cured Babell, but shee would not be healed: let vs leaue her therfore, and come out of her, least ye be pertakers of her sins and of her punishments. And of Ierusalem the Lord saith, Iere. 15. Who wil take pitty on Ierusalem, & who wil pray for her peace; thou hast left me saith the Lord, & hast gone backward. As if he had said, I wil heale thy malady no more. Pharaoh had diuers plagues to heale him, but he continued in his stubbernes. God left him for the multitude of his sins; for God denieth to such sinners, not only his effectuall helpe & the power of his holy spirit to their cōuersion, but all other helps also, whereby other sinners are allured vnto repentance.

King

King Saule offended God greatly, he was pardoned, and had a faire warning, & least he should offend againe, he had an especiall commaundement, but he fell afterward in such sort, that falling from God, he neuer recouered againe, neither returned into fauour. The sonnes of Ely were not obedient vnto the voyce of their Father, the reason is added, because the Lord would destroy them for their manifold sinnes, and that they vvere past amendement. And though Moses, Noah, and Samuel, should pray for such people, the Lord would not heare them, neither would he be entreated in their behalfe.

A restoratiue in second falls.

Now for a restoratiue in this wofull case, this may be added, that no man or woman despaire, if they be not vtterly past grace, though they fall againe, seeing there is a difference, betwixt a resolute determination in sinne, & a repentant mind, which is hartily sorry for euery fall and offence.

Gods mercy doth often-times cast out the deuill, that hee cannot haue any quiet possession, and wandring in dry places, and being in his sorrowful banishment, he is still busie with vs, to giue him entertainment againe. Which we doe, as often as by sinne

we quench Gods spirit in vs, and haue not
that reuerent, & due, & waighty considera-
tion of Gods grace, as wee ought to haue.
He that hath beene sick and newly recoue-
red, vnlesse he take great heed he falleth in-
to his sicknes againe: So we being newly
cleansed from our sinne, through our neg-
ligence and carelesnes fall many wayes into
it againe. First, because we think our selues
whole & sound, & vpon a sodaine are cast
downe againe. Againe, though sin be for
a while banished, it is not cleane rooted out,
for reliques remain, & such sparkles which
will kindle flames. We are sleepy, and the
deuill is too watchfull; the spirit is weake,
& the lusts of the flesh too powerfull. The
Israelites deliuered out of Ægipt, had the
Philistimes to molest them, & the deuil by
his temptations, & the world by euil coun-
sell, and euill example, are alwayes at our el-
bowes, to trip vs and to giue vs a fall. The
sick man being newly recouered, must com
to his strength by dainty meates, & he that
is newly recouered frō sinne, must seeke af-
ter heauenly food, to make his soule strong,
as often prayer, hearing Sermons, reading
of good bookes, and frequenting good cō-
pany, harkning to good counsaile, & by all
meanes

meanes to auoid the occasions of his former downfall. Let him not presume of his strength, nor thinke himselfe too sound, diuers occasions may make him fall againe. Still let him suspect the worst, and feare a fall; for he that will resist the deuill, must still stande armed. The body is kept in health by labour and exercise, and the soule if it will continue in a happy estate, must not onely auoide all euill works, to the best of our power; but wee must endeuour to practise all good workes, and so shall wee make our foundation so sure, that nothing shall ouer-throw vs. And this shall be vnto vs, in steede of walls of brasse, to keepe out the fierie darts, and fierce assaultes of the deuill. So shall wee continue in that state, wherein GOD by his mercy hath sette vs free. Otherwise, if we be carelesse and negligent, and sliding into our former sinnes, if the deuill take new possession, after hee hath beene throwne out, and so throw vs out of Gods fauour, and remoue vs from our happines, wherein wee were newly placed; Surely it may be well said of vs, the last state of that man shall be worse then the first. Our great vnconstancy, and weak frailty, and vile corruption, and most

infected

infected dispotions, doe heerein shew them selues, in that solemnly professing our repentance for any bad behauiour, and vowing to the Lord, and with our selues, that no more wee will doe so, yet contrary both to promise and to purpose, we fall againe, into the selfe same offence and sinne. And if the Lorde should neuer receaue vs againe, after such a transgression, we had but what iustly and greatly we deserued. Yet Gods mercy is more, not to embolden any to wickednes and impiety, but to comfort them that are inwardly greeued, with their great frailties. Wherefore, with desire to stand, & all possible endeuour against such second falls, let vs heare yet what the Lord saith, if in our great weaknes we doe fall, I meane into the same offence again after repentance. For we see the prophets in euery place exhort men to repentance, not which had once offēded, but which with an obstinate cōtempt of God, had not staied to run into all kind of wickednes, & which after a shew of repētance, yet returned to their sinfull course again, the prophet Ieremy of all other is full of places, if you list to read any. Againe, the Lord in his law, would haue daily sacrifices offred, somtime in the name of

of the whole people, somtime in the name of a priuate person, as well for offences cõmitted by ignorance, as for voluntary transgressions and falls, which assuredly should not haue been done, except there had been mercy euen for second falls. For the Lord would not deceaue his people with vaine figures. In the 78. Psalm, we very plainly see, that God was entreated to forgiue most hipocriticall & obstinate sinnes. And now in the time of his Gospel, his goodnes is not straited or deminished, but euen now also more plainly it is proclaimed to the world, that at what time so euer a sinner sorroweth from his hart, there is pardon with the Lord, without exception against often cõmitting of the same offence. When the Lord inioyneth vs to forgiue our brethren seauenty times seauen times, doth he meane new offences only, such as they neuer committed against vs before; or he meaneth all whatsoeuer, or how often so euer, fallen into by their frailty. And if so, doth he require more mercy of man, then he the God of mercy wil shew; or shal the creature excell the Creator in any goodnes? God forbid. See it therefore, and be with comfort most assured of it, that if we sin, not seauen

times,

times, but seauenty times seauen times against his Maiestie, and euen in the same thing, and so often with weeping eyes and sobbing soule, fall at his feete for mercy, for so great frailty, there is mercy with him, and pardon to true repentance.

Beware presumption.

But take heede we turne not the grace of God into wantonnes & presumption. For if I seeke and suck out loosenes and liberty out of this doctrine, be sure I sauour it to death and not vnto life. And what know I, whether euer I shall haue grace truly to repent, what so boldly and presumptuously I haue dared to commit. When the Apostle saith, If any man sinne, we haue an aduocate with the Father, Iesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sinnes; doe ye think we may tie this, to only such sinns, as were neuer committed before, without a very plaine and great iniury to that place of Scripture? No, no, we cannot, & therefore a true ground of comfort, euen for sinns often fallen into, so that frailty, and not loosenes be the cause. Reade the ninth of Daniel, and see if he confesse not sinne often committed, and as it were in a continued course, and yet despaireth not of mercy. What meaneth that article of our

faith,

faith, I beleeue the forgiuenes of sins? shall we glose vpon it thus, that is of such sinnes as I neuer committed but once. Surely if we doe, it must be said, cursed be the glose that corrupteth the text. For that article comprizeth all sinne, before baptisme, and after baptisme, before repentance, and after repentance, euer through the course of my life, in this world whatsoeuer it is, how often so euer I haue slided into it through frailty; yet God giuing me true repentance for it, I beleeue the forgiuenes of it. Yea, it is that spirituall comfort, that cannot be spoken of sufficiently, neyther can wee enter into the depth or heigth thereof: to wit, that GOD would haue his children, so sure of the pardon of their sinnes, euen of all their sins, without exception: whereof he giueth them a dislike, and true abhorring, as that he would haue it an article of their faith, so that they should not be sound Christians, if they beleeued it not. Lastly, euen the petition in the Lords prayer, crauing daily forgiuenes of daily trespasses, dare you restaine it, to trespasses committed onely before repentance, and exempt all second falls, after such repentance and purpose to amend, the Lord forbid. And there-

therefore take it also with the former, as a sure proofe of pardon also, for these offences. Onely let mee admonish you, which I cannot too often speake of; beware presumption, beware loosenes, beware negligence, and haue due care to auoide these second falls. And say not God is mercifull, and therefore I will sin, Ro.6.1. For as he is gracious to a sorowful sinner, so is he dreadful to a presumptuous offender; and frailty shall find mercy, when boldnes shall finde iudgement and wrath for euer.

The godly, although they fall through the infirmity and weakenes of the flesh, yet they doe not giue their consent to sin, but by mourning striue against it, being sorry they cannot haue the better hand, being ashamed of themselues. So that they may truly say with the Apostle, Ro.7. The euill which I would not doe, that doe I.

And if Manasses, after so many abhominations found fauour with God, as his effectuall prayer doth testifie, why should the godly mind be cast away in despaire. And though it seeme somewhat impertinent to this purpose, let vs beholde the estate of King Solomon, beeing so rarely endued with wisedome, & the knowledge of Gods

seruice,

seruice,yet fell away by idolatry; of whom some doubt whether he were condemned. Yet that it was not so, these reasons briefly set downe,may perswade vs. First, that he was a figure of Christ. Secondly, conside-ring his most excellent prayer, which hee made at the dedication of the temple,a note of Gods spirit inhabiting in him, which al-so did worthily shew it self in his most rare wisedome. Thirdly, for his repentance, testified in his booke called Ecclesiastes. Fourthly,because God loued him. 2.Sa.12. 24. As it is saide of Esau and Iacob, God hated the one, and loued the other, Ro. 9. 13. and whom God loueth he loueth to the end.Ioh.13,1.Also the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, Ro.11.29. Fiftly,for Gods promise. Ps.89. My mer-cy will I keepe for him for euermore, my louing kindnes will I not take from him. My couenant wil I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

Reasons to prooue why Solomon was not cō-demned.

No reason therefore there is,for any of vs to despaire of Gods grace and goodnes, if there be any sparke of grace left within vs; in the meane time let vs take heed, that we quench not the spirit, and bring sorrow to our selues,and danger to our soules. How-

beit,

beit, the moſt bad nature of mankinde is ſuch, and we become ſuch greeuous offenders, and ſo careleſſe with all of our owne ſaluation, and ſo wholy giuen vp to the world, and to the vanities & pleaſures therof, that vnleſſe the Lord by his ſurpaſſing & wonderfull mercy, ſhould turne vs vnto repentance, by more great vehement, and weighty helps of his grace,then commonly are to be ſeene,and more mightily & graciouſly ſhould mollifie our hard and ſtony harts, and breake and tame our euill diſpoſitions, and bring vnder our froward and ſtubborn wills,to the obedience of his moſt holy will, ſurely we ſhould neuer continue in a good courſe, but fall away from God, and from our owne ſaluation.

Seeing therefore it is ſo hard to be wone to God, let vs take heede how we fall away from God; and if we haue offended & be forgiuen,and often forgiuen,let vs remember the warning Chriſt gaue to the woman taken in adultery, Goe thy wayes and ſinne no more. Shimei that curſed Dauid, and had his pardon graunted him, on that condition he ſhould not goe out of Ieruſalem, forgetting his promiſe, that ſtood vpon ſo waighty a condition, as the hazzard of his

life, through a ſmall occaſion, for couetouſnes to recouer his ſeruant that was gone frō him, loſt his life, without any more fauour or hope of mercy. At which time alſo his former wickednēs was brought to his remembrance, & his puniſhment pronoūced to be ſo much the iuſter for that. So let vs lay this example to our hart, & take heede of the leaſt occaſions of ſin, leaſt after wee haue repented & vowed amendement, we be taken tardy in our owne negligence and forgetfulnes, and all our former wickednes layd to our charge, and no fauour & mercie any more to be graunted. Remember Lots wife, 2. Pet. 2. 19. For of whom ſoeuer a man is ouercome, euen vnto the ſame is he in bondage.

And if we, after wee haue eſcaped from the filthineſſe of the worlde, through the knowledge of the Lord, and of our Sauiour Ieſus Chriſt, are yet intangled againe therein, and ouercome, our latter end ſhall be worſe then our beginning. pſalm. 125. 5. The Lorde will be good to thoſe that are true of hart; and as for ſuch as turne backe vnto theyr owne wickednes, the Lord will leade them forth with the euill dooers. If any with-draw himſelfe, ſaith the Lord, my

ſoule

ſoule ſhall haue no pleaſure in him. Let vs often remember that warning,with due cõſideration,which I haue already ſpoken vnto you of; Sin no more, leaſt a worſe thing come vnto thee. 2. Cor. 2. 11. Beware of often ſliding, & eſpecially let vs take heed that we adde not ſin vnto ſin, leaſt we meet with that worſe thing, that is, leaſt wee die in our ſin, and be damned for euer. 2. Pet. 3.17. Ye therefore beloued,ſeeing ye know theſe things before, beware, leaſt ye be alſo plucked away, with the euill conuerſation of the wicked, & fall from your own ſtedfaſtnes. But grow in grace, & in the knowledge of our Lord & Sauiour Ieſus Chriſt: to whom be glory both now and for euermore. Amen.

Gen.38,26, Pſal,68,21, & 66, 16, Wiſd.1.2. to 6.

Deo ſoli omnis laus ſit, et gloria, et gratia in ſecula.

Of the Prodigall Sonne.

LVKE. 15. 11.

Hee said moreouer, A certaine man had two sonnes: And the younger of them said to his Father: Father, giue mee the portion of the goods, that falleth to me. So hee deuided to them his substance. &c.

AFter that the vncleane spirit was driuen out of the prodigall sonne, and that he had left his lewde life, hee returned not to his owne euill custome againe, neyther did he giue the deuill a second entrance. Wee read not that Dauid, Mary Magdalen, and Peter, sinned anie more, as they had done. For why, the remembrance of theyr former sinnes, made them more watchful and wary. 2. Cor. 2. 11. Gen. 38. 26.

This parable dooth liuely represent vnto vs, our excellent, our decayed, and our restored estate. Our excellent estate in Adam, in whom our patrimony was giuen vs, in most large and liberall sort, we being endued with holines and righteousnes, being created after the image of God, beeing furni-

furniſhed and adorned vvith all heauenlie gifts and graces, and beeing furthered with all temporall bleſſings, fit and conuenient for this life. Our decaied eſtate, through his wilful diſobedience and manifold offences, through our originall corruption and actuall deprauation, our euill inclinations, & our diſordered life, behauiour, and conuerſation. Our reſtored eſtate, in our conuerſion to GOD, in true and vnfained repentance, in a holy life, and godly obedience, as alſo eſpecially in Gods great bountifulnes and mercy, in calling vs, in giuing vs repentance, mollifying our hard harts by his heauenly grace, and by his worde inſtructing vs daily, in the courſe of godlines, and eſpecially by his powerfull working in vs, framing vs there-vnto, and inabling vs to performe what ſoeuer is agreeable to his holy will and lawe, whereby wee are dailie more and more acceptable vnto him.

Againe, it ſheweth vs, what we are, beeing left vnto our ſelues: how eaſily wee are giuen to fall away from GOD. Nothing doth ſooner bring vs to the knowledge of God and of our ſelues, then our owne rod and miſery. Furthermore, we ſee the happie eſtate of affliction, in that it is a meane

to bring vs to repentance, and to the fauour of GOD. Laſtly, heere appeareth Gods great bountifulnes and infinite mercie toward ſinners, wayting for our repentance, and reioycing at our conuerſion, and beeing more ready to forgiue then we to aske pardon. Wherein this is a great comfort vnto vs, that the infinite multitude of ſinnes cannot remooue his mercy from vs. But to follow the text more naturally, and in ſuch order as it is layde downe before vs, let vs conſider theſe obſeruations.

Firſt, that hauing receaued his patrimonie, he went from his fathers houſe.

Secondly not onely frō his fathers houſe, but into a farre country.

Thirdly, what he did there. He ſpent his patrimony riotouſly and waſtfully.

Fourthly, vvhat inſued in thoſe dayes. There followed a famine.

Fiftlie, the miſerable eſtate of a ſinner, vnder the condition of the prodigal ſonne, feeding ſwine.

Sixtly, the effectuall conuerſion of a ſinner, & where-hence it proceedeth, namely from affliction, & the knowledge and feeling of his owne miſery. Seuenthly, how Chriſt is our preſent Aduocate, in our diſtreſſe

stresse and misery, when we call vpon him, earnestly and vnfainedly, and in truth and sincerity. Because through the humble sute of Christ, the prodigall son obtained mercie. Eyghtly, the infinite mercy of GOD, which is not ouercome by the multitude of our sinnes, to remoue all despaire. Ninthly, the great solemnity that God and all the holy Angels doe make, at the conuersion of a sinner. Lastly, an incouragement to them that liue well, that they may continue in well dooing, and be godly stil. As also an instruction to them, not to murmure at Gods works, but rather to reuerence them, and to reioyce that it hath pleased him to deale so graciously with sinners, and to call them home that went so far astray. Whereby vvee are further taught, not rashly to iudge of any, but to hope the best, and in charitie to pray for their amendment.

There is no parable in the gospell more full of comfort & consolation. Whereby I am perswaded, that there is no such greeuous sinner, nor hainous offender, vvhich would not turn vnto God, if he consider in this example gods goodnes & boūtifulnes, and the entire loue of so mercifull a Father, which of his own gracious accord, went out

to

to meete his prodigall ſonne,and to receiue him without any ſhew of deniall; contrary to the cuſtome of earthly Fathers, vvhich fret and fume, and are hardly drawne to ſuch mercy. How kindly doth he embrace him,array him, put a ring on his finger, kill the fatted calfe for him, make merry & reioyce for him. And howe farre of hee was frō caſting in his teeth, his former euill life, that he maketh no mention thereof, but rather findeth fault vvith the elder brother that repined thereat, ſeeking to ſatiſ-fie and appeaſe him.

The younger ſonne, not in age but in manners, not in yeeres, but in want of wiſdome, whereby he is the more eaſily inclined, and drawne vnto bad wayes. Some aged men, are but young in theyr wordes, geſture, and conuerſation: and theſe the prophet Eſay, *65*. calleth young men of an hundred yeeres old. Some are young men concerning their time, & yet are aged men in good behauiour, as Ioſeph, Dauid, Samuell, Daniell, Iohn Baptiſt. According to that the Lord ſaid vnto Moſes, Numb. 11. Gather vnto me ſeuenty men, whom thou knoweſt to be auncient in diſcretion, giuen to be vertuous and godly, & well diſpoſed.

The foolishnes and lightnes of a sinner is heere set forth, in that he is termed a young man. For, for the most part they know but little, and haue experience but of a fewe matters, they are vnskilfull in theyr owne affayres, and stand in great neede of counsell.

If this prodigall Sonne, left his Fathers house, and sought his owne decay and destruction, it was through his owne folly, where-with hee was ouer-ruled, and headlong carried away. As fore-cast is more worth then great maintenaunce: so is wisedome the disposer & the continuer of great wealth. Children consider no more then that which is before theyr eyes, neyther doe they fore-cast things to come. Deut. 32. O that they were wise, then woulde they vnderstand this, they would consider theyr latter end. And our Sauiour Christ saith, Luke. 19. O that they had known the time of theyr visitation, at the least in thys theyr day. The Apostle Saint Paule wisheth euery where vnto the faithfull, that they bee filled with the knowledge of God. For it is no meruaile, if God be forsaken of them to whom hee is not knowne, which neyther heare the worde of God, nor haue it, nor make

Foolishnes.

make any care or regard thereof.

The prodigall ſonne vnderſtood not the great bleſſings that vvere in his Fathers houſe, but afterward affliction gaue him to vnderſtand, when he felt the want thereof. So we leaue God & fall into ſinne, becauſe we know not the miſchiefes that flow from thence. Were it not that the Hawkes eyes were hidde, and his feete tyed, hee would mount aloft into the skies: ſo if the eyes of our minde were not blinded with worldlie pleaſures and vanities, wee ſhould ſure be lifted vp with heauenly thoughts, to deſpiſe theſe earthly delights. For all the commodities and pleaſures of this life, haue but a ſhort time of continuance, Phil. 3. Sinners continuing in theyr ſinfull race, are inwardly blinded, that they cannot ſee the light of God, nor finde the way to come out of theyr lothſome darkneſſe. For although there be many ſins, ſome of weaknes, and ſome of malice, yet ignorance is the roote of all. For when we know not whether there be a God or a deuill, heauen or hell, ioyes or torments, no meruaile if wee wilfully runne into all wickedneſſe. All vvhich, if the ſinner did well knovve and beleeue, hee would not ſo eaſily offend as

Blindnes.

he

he doth, at least-wise hee would not fall into so many and so great and dangerous sins as he doth, and that daily.

No man sinneth, but hee that seeth not what hee looseth by sinning. Therefore let vs pray with the prophet. psalme. 12. Lord lighten mine eyes, that I fall not in death. And psalm. 118. Giue mee vnderstanding, and I will search thy law, yea I will keepe it with my whole hart. Let vs desire true knowledge, that we doe not leaue GOD, that wee may remaine with him, and be in his house, be content to be ruled by him, & keepe his commaundements.

Not onely ignorance of Gods goodnes, blessings, gyfts and graces, doth turne vs away from God, but also the confidence in our owne strength, our owne selfe will, and our owne selfe-loue. No perswasions can alter a young mans mind, and a wilful sinner, vntill he haue fully tryed his own way. Beyond all measure they trust too much to themselues, to their own strength and wisdome, policy and fetches, thinking themselues to be of such good gouernment, that they know well enough, how to order & to dispose their owne matters. And this selfe wisdom, is the cause that many forsake god.

Confidence in his owne wisedom.

There-

Therefore the Lord saith, Reuel. 3. Thou sayest, I am rich, and want nothing, and knowest not that thou art miserable, and poore, and blind, and naked. But how little wee are able to doe without Gods helpe and grace, shall be shewed hereafter. Peter was bold, and presumed saying, Though all men be offended, yet will not I be offended; who because he trusted too much to his owne strength, was ouer-come by a silly maid. Mat. 26. So also Dauid heerein confesseth his owne fault, Psal, 29. I sayde in my prosperitie, I shall neuer be remooued, and presently after, Thou turnedst away thy face from me, and I was troubled. And hauing full tryall in himselfe, hee reproueth them which put not theyr trust in God. Psal. 52. 8. Loe, this is the man that tooke not God for his strength, but trusted vnto the multitude of his riches, and strengthned himselfe in his wickednes.

Father. &c. But now let vs heare this foolish youngster, and prodigall waster. [Father, sayth he, giue mee the portion of the goods that falleth to mee.] This portion is that gift of reason & vnderstanding, which God hath imparted vnto vs. As if he had said, Father, giue me leaue to liue as I list, and to doe as

I thinke good. Heere-hence commeth all the mischiefes and inconueniences in the world, eyther because men desire to doe what they list, or else, because men regarde not to liue after Gods will, and in his obedience. He would be like vnto God, to order all thinges according to his pleasure. Thys pride and selfe-will, is the beginning of all sinne in the world, which maketh thē accursed that are thereto addicted. He shaketh off his fathers gouernment, & his own will must stand for a law. Selfe-loue ouerthrowes iudgement, darkneth sence & reason, poysoneth the will, and hindereth the course of saluation, shutting vp all passage thereunto. For such men as are so intangled with the loue of themselues, neyther know God, nor loue theyr neighbour, nor seeke after vertue; but onely minde those things whereby they may aduaunce themselues, gaping for honour, and hunting after promotion.

Free-will doth vnderprop this selfe-loue, which of it selfe is but a weake stay. For although by sin our free-will be not vtterlie taken away, in naturall and morall actions, yet neuerthelesse, it remaineth so weake & vnable, and so defaced in spirituall matters, Freewill.

that

that it cannot resist any temptations. But as a ship in the Sea hauing lost her rudder, is tossed to and fro with the least blast of wind: So this free-will of ours, vnlesse it be conformed by repentance and humilitie, & framed a newe by yeelding our selues to Gods gracious direction, (for of our selues we are not able so much as to think a good thought,) it is so crazed and so wauering, that it is easilie ouerthrowne, by euerie temptation of the flesh, the world, and the deuill.

Before the fal of our first parents, our free will was perfect, inclining to all goodnes, but after theyr fall, it became subiect to sin, and to damnation, from the which it could not be deliuered, but by the grace of Christ our Sauiour and Redeemer. Yet the wil of man hath not altogether lost his force and freedome, beeing ruled by deliberation, iudgement, aduice, and consent. Without me, ye can doe nothing, saith Christ. Iohn. 15. Where our power to doe good is taken away, not our free-will.

The infant hath power to goe, but is subiect euery minute to a fall: So the weake will of man, hath some power and libertie, but yet without the helpe & grace of God,

it cannot frame it selfe the right way, to the course of a better life, to continue in goodnesse, no more then a chylde can goe farre without the helpe of his Nurse and guide, to stay and to direct him. The infant that is falne, cannot rise without the helpe of his Nurse; and we that are falne into sinne, can not rise from sinne our selues, neither haue we power to leaue sinne, or to embrace the good inspirations of Gods holy Spirit, or to refuse and resist the deuils temptations, without the speciall grace of God, vvhich onely can raise vs, and giue vs courage and comfort vnto all godlines.

The infant, although he be ledde by the hand of the Nurse, may be vnwilling to go, so a sinner may be obstinate and continue in his sinnes, although he be directed, corrected, and punished by Gods hand. All euill deedes come through our owne freevvill, but all good purposes, come from the inspiration of Gods grace. For after the fall of our first Parents, vvee were borne the chyldren of vvrath, and conceaued in sinne, and by the force of our free-will, we coulde neyther rise from sinne, nor yet fulfull the commaundements of almightie GOD.

Nay,

Nay, although wee haue obtained Gods grace, and forgiuenes of our sinnes, yet are we not of force enough to ouer-come the deuils temptations, and to auoyd our fleshly lusts, vnlesse by the continuall and dailie helpe of GOD, wee be strengthned in the gift of perseuerance to a godly life. Wherhence it is manifest, that seeing we can doe so little of our owne selues, that it is great rashnes too much to presume of our owne strength, and to trust to our own wisedom, whereby we may think our selues wel able, to rule and gouerne our selues through our owne direction.

This made the prodigall sonne too foolishly, and like a chylde that wants discretion, to desire to liue according to his owne libertie. God draweth not any one against his will to saluation, but suffereth the wicked to take theyr owne course. The prodigall sonnes father did not hold him, beeing willing to depart: neyther doth hee inforce him to depart, beeing willing to stay. The portion of goods which GOD doth giue to euery one, is to some eloquence, to other-some, wisedom or riches, or strength, or knowledge, or place of honor, all which wee are giuen most easily to abuse, as thys prodi-

prodigall Sonne ſpent his portion waſtfully. And this is worthy to be noted, and daily to be ſeene by common experience, that they that haue the beſt gifts, do eyther not vſe them at all, or elſe apply them to an euill end, not to commend Gods graces in them, but to make themſelues the more inexcuſable.

And not long after.] For of our ſelues we cannot long ſtand, but wee fall quicklie and ſuddenly, as ſoone as God with-draweth his hand. And the deuill ſleepeth not, but watcheth & ſeeketh all occaſions, how hee may ouerthrow that man or that vvoman, whom he ſeeth deſtitute of Gods help and grace; the deuill hath ſome-what to ſet him aworke, vntil he hath brought to paſſe his owne deſtruction. When our firſt Parents were left to themſelues, through the high conceit of ambition, they threw themſelues downe into great miſery, vvhile the deuill in the meane time perſwaded them to be as Gods.

When the younger ſonne had gathered all together.] We being fully fraught with Gods gifts, either wiſedome, riches, honor, ſtrength, or the like, we begin to take pride, and think there ſhall be no alteration. This When &c.

prodigall ſon thought himſelfe in ſo good caſe, and ſo well prouided, that no thought of future miſery did once enter into his minde, as though it were vnpoſſible that euer he ſhould feele the miſery of aduerſity, thinking no other but that his wealth and proſperous eſtate, ſhould neuer come to an end. Hee left his Fathers houſe, truſting to his treaſure, and to his wit, and ſo begins to dig downe his mountaine, which afterward came to a mole-hill. But marke howe hee lifts himſelfe aloft, hauing gathered all together. Saul being of low degree, and in his Fathers houſe, amongſt the common ſort, liued well, and commendably, but hauing obtained a kingdome, hee left the Lord, & did much wickednes. Dauid, beeing as yet a ſhepheard, and perſecuted by king Saul, his life was without blame; but when God gaue him reſt frō all his enemies; then did he commit adultery and murder.

Proſperitie abuſed.

Heere wee may learne to take diſlike, againſt the riches, honours, and proſperous eſtate of this world. For, for want of wiſedome, and through negligence, great danger commeth at vnawares. In the Mountaines of Gilboa, King Saul and his ſonnes were ſlaine, and in the honours and proſperitie

ritie of the world, vertue dooth oftentimes take a fall. Prosperity at the first shew appeareth most sweet and pleasant, but bringeth there-withall great dangers to the soule, if they be not wisely preuented. In prosperitie therefore thinke of aduersity, & so the thought of alteration & change, shal breed wisedome and moderation. The pride of prosperitie cast downe this prodigall Son into extreame misery. Haman was happy when he was in fauour with the King, but in his greatest iolity, his destruction vvas then most neere. The same fell out to Pharao and Senacharib, the one beeing drowned in the Red-sea, the other beeing stabd in by his owne sonnes. But when this prodigall Sonne had this libertie, let vs see what hee did, and how hee imployed himselfe.

He tooke his iourny into a far country.] 2.
Farre away, hee thought not himselfe farre enough. But who willed him to depart, who put him out of the house? His Father sent him not into banishment, neyther vvilled him to go out of his house, but he himselfe, no body denying him, of his ovvne accord, or rather through his owne lightnesse hee went away, and left his Fathers house. So

Into a farre Country.

the ſinner of his owne accord, dooth leaue the gouernment of his heauenly Father, & doth make a voluntary ſeparation, refuſing the direction of Gods word, the counſell of the godly, & of their faithfull friendes, yea ſpurning againſt the ſecret warning of their owne conſcience.

Will.

No doubt many about his Father, gaue him counſel to the contrary, but they could not turne his mind, all meanes were aſſaied, but nothing woulde ſerue the turne, nor beate backe the humor of his licentious libertie, his ſtubborne will coulde not be tamed, his minde muſt needes bee fulfilled. Vnder this parable, the lawleſſe affections of many young men are ſette downe. For this prodigall ſonne liueth yet, and will do, vntill the worlds end. But if they wil needs goe, and will needes haue their ſwinge and ſway, if they will needes run their race, they haue theyr time, euen ſuch a time, that god doth leaue them to themſelues. For God doth not forſake any, till hee be firſt forſaken. And if we will needs goe, be it known vnto vs, that we runne vpon our manifeſt hazzard & danger. For who can tell whether in this diſordered courſe, he ſhal come to miſchiefe, or to ſome miſerable end, or

whether

whether God will ſhew him mercy, that he may cal himſelfe to better remēbrance. As we read Eccles. 11. Reioyce ô young man, &c. God worketh with thoſe that flie from him diuers wayes, eyther by ſecrete croſſes and afflictions, or by open puniſhments & miſerable ends. 1. Tim. *5*. 24. or els by granting vnto ſome the gracious gift of repentance. Hee runneth far that neuer returnes, as indeede many are ſo deſperatly bent that they neuer returne. But into this prodigall ſonne, God poured ſuch abundance of his mercy, that it had his iſſue in plentifull teares, and he became a new man. And ſo happy was his conuerſion, that his Father had great ioy thereof, expreſſing the ſame in diuers comfortable tokens.

Out of this example we may gather, that the cauſe of ſin is our owne will, not God, or the deuill; yea, our owne ſinfull fleſh, how ſoeuer many can make blind excuſes, for theyr owne euill life. The firſt beginning of all euill is to turne away from God. The children of men, ſaith the Prophet, pſal. *62*. *9*. are deceitfull vpon the weights: For in one ballance they put their pleaſures and profits, in another they place GOD and heauenly conſiderations, making the

 one

one to weigh a great deale lighter then the other; making more account of earthlie things then of God, whom we should loue aboue all, with all our hart, and with all our soule. All that God hath done for thē, they consider not, and they altogether neglect. Your sinnes, saith the prophet Esay, haue made a separation betwixt you and your God. A false ballance is an abhomination vnto god, prou. 11, 1.

Rashnes. This prodigall sonne, as a man of no experience went rashly to worke, neyther did he consider what good things hee enioyed in his Fathers house, nor what he lost, nor yet howe great danger hee did vnder-take. He little considered the manifold inconueniences that fall out in this life. Hee that is too rash, shall afterward repent. Man sinneth in hast, because hee cannot a little refraine his wilful affection, before he do dulie and wisely consider the end of sin, & the euil successe therof. But if we could refraine our selues, and not rush on so hastily, little considering the danger of our soules, vvee would not run on into such head-long sin. Therfore Dauid said. psal. 118. I considered my waies, & turned my feete vnto thy testimonies. The Bethulians were too rash to

yeeld

yeeld themselues to Holofernes, if God did not helpe them within fiue daies. As oft as the people of Israell came to Moses, before he would giue them an aunswere, he asked counsel of God. O that we would take this course, as oft as the desire of reuenge, honour, or lust should prouoke our mindes, not to giue any of these any aunswere, vntill we had asked counsell of god; but wee aunswere hastily & rashly, not considering god nor his commaundements, & so runne into diuers mischiefes and dangers. Iosua rashly beleeuing the Gibeonites was deceaued. Good aduisement must goe before good deeds, much more before euill deeds. The virgine Mary, before shee aunswered the Angell, did wisely consider what manner of salutation that should be. A foolish Nation Deut. 32. without counsel & wisedome, doth not consider nor forecast their latter end. Dauid too hastily beleeuing Sheba, his lying tale, did great wrong to Mephibosheth, contrary to his couenaunt. VVhen the woman taken in adultery vvas brought before our sauiour Christ, he made a stay before he spake his mind. When Achab was throughly bent to warre, the prophet Micheas warned him hee should not

doe

doe it, hee tooke not his warning, but the King was one of the first that died, nay the onely man, and none but he that perished. For the King of Aram made proclamation, fight neyther against small nor great, saue onely against the King of Israell. And when the King was smitten, the battel was ended. 1. Reg. 22. 34. 36. So the sinner which is as it were bewitched, and too much giuen to any sinne, no warning of Preachers, nor counsell of friends, shall vvithdraw him frō sin, or bring him to amendement, vntill his owne rod hath made him smart, or his own deserued destruction hath made an vtter end of him. As also on the contrary side, there be bad companions to perswade him and to harden him in his sin, that hee cannot turne backe, nor so much as haue any leysure to entertaine a thought of repentance. Therfore, if thou wilt not goe wandring out of the way of life, lay aside thy disordered passions & affections.

Balaam, before hee went to curse the people of God, asked counsell of God, & had the deniall, yet through the desire of rewards and promotion, hee was foolishlie led along to his owne destruction. GOD opened the mouth of his Asse, & hee gaue him

him warning, and it would not be: his eyes were opened as Elisha his seruant to see the hoast that compassed Elisha, and he saw an Angell with a drawne sword, ready to sley him, yet must he needs goe forward whom the deuill driues. When thou art set to sin, thy conscience doth reproue thee, but thou wilt not be warned, and beatest it backe: therefore, if thou payest for it by Gods correction and punishment, gods iudgement is iust, & thou hast cause to condemne thy owne wilfulnes, as many doe when they are brought to lamentable ends. Therfore the Wise man saith, Ecclus. 18. Goe not after thy concupiscence, nor followe not the inticement of thy lust, let reason and iudgement take place, & pray with the prophet, psalm. 17. O Lord lighten my darknes. Euery determination goeth awry, vvhich proceedeth rather from thy will, then from reason and iudgement.

The Iewes hauing theyr choyce, rather call for Barrabas to be deliuered thē Christ, and wee iudge them woorthy of extreame punishment, that were so vniust in theyr verdict, and so wicked in their consent. But consider thy selfe, and thou makest a farre worse choyce; for thou yeeldest thy selfe to

sin,

ſin, and giueſt thy ſoule to the deuill, refuſing Chriſt & thine own ſaluation. Heereby ſhewing thy ſelfe farre worſe then euer the Iewes were in theyr choyce. The prodigall ſonne had rather follow his luſt, then obey his father, and made more choyce of his owne licentious libertie, then of all the benefits that were to be had in his Fathers houſe: So the ſinner maketh more account of his owne ſinfull delights, then of all the ioyes of heauen.

Degrees in ſinning.

The prodigall ſonne goeth into a farre country, and one ſinner goeth farther from god then another, ſome ſinne of infirmitie, ſome of ignorance, & ſome of malice, ſome of preſumption, and ſome againſt the holy Ghoſt. Many thinke they cannot run far enough from god, of whom the prophet ſpeaketh, pſalm. 139. Whether ſhall wee flie from gods preſence: Shall we flie into heauen? it is no part of our thought. Shall we flie into the vttermoſt part of the earth, the whole world is vnder Gods gouernment. Shal we flie into hel? no ſay we, that way of all other we would eſcape & auoid, although indeed we make choyce of it, and the broade way that leadeth to deſtruction is more beaten. Why if it were there, ſurely

gods

gods hand would finde vs out there. Shall wee take a long voyage by sea, into some new-found Land: it may be God wil send vs further then we are minded to flie. For little did Ionas thinke by flying from God, that god would send him into the bottome of the sea. For though Ionas returned from death to life, yet was that a rare example of gods mercie, and the like punishment rather to be feared, then such a strange euent to be looked & hoped for. Well, if we will not venture so farre, but onely flie into the darknes, we must know that with God, the darknes and light are all one. Ecclus.23.18. And although Adam hid himselfe from gods presence, yet was he still in gods presence, neither could he escape.

He that trauels into a farre country, may meete with theeues to spoyle him, may wander into deserts and vnknowne wayes, may light among wild beastes that may deuoure him. Howsoeuer, hee shall come among vnknown people, whose conditions he may feare, but scarcely trust, and sooner shall he fall into the company of bad cōpanions, then of those that shal do him good, or haue care of his welfare. All these dangers & inconueniences might hee auoyde,

by

by remaining in his Fathers house, & yeelding himselfe into his fathers gouernment. The prophet Esay, chap. 29. maketh mention of some, that did honour God vvith theyr lips, but theyr harts were farre from him. But how can it be, that seeing God is euery where, that any of vs all can goe farre from him. As the prophet Dauid sayth: psalme. 139. Whether shall I goe from thy presence? If I goe vp into heauen, thou art there: if I goe downe into hell, thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remaine in the vttermost parts of the sea, euen there also, &c. There is no distance of place betwixt God and the sinner, for God by his power and omnipotencie is euery where, neither can wee escape gods presence. But the sinner goeth farre away from the Lord, by his rebellious will. Honour thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt not kill, steale, beare false witnes, couet. The practise of a sinner is quite contrary vnto these, as the common experience of the world doth shew.

The Scribes & Pharises loued that which Christ hated, and hated that which Christ commaunded. Either in thought, word, or deede, wee are quite contrary vnto Gods

law,

law, and ſo goe far away from him. Therefore the prophet ſaith well, Health and ſaluation is far from the ſinner, becauſe they haue refuſed the righteouſnes of God. The ſinner is ſeparated from GOD, by his vngodly behauiour and wicked deedes. Hee goeth fartheſt from god, that committeth the greateſt ſinne: as hee that doth wrong to his parents, rather then he which hurteth his neighbour, and hee ſinneth more that killeth his neighbour, then hee that luſteth after another mans wife. Being in the eſtate of grace our ſinne is greater, then when before we taſted Gods goodnes, & had a feeling thereof: and when thou haſt forſaken the world, to cleaue againe to the world & to embrace it, whē thou haſt repented thee of thy ſin, and then to fall into it againe, is a greater offence. Of whom Chriſt ſayth: Nowe thou art clenſed ſin no more, leaſt a worſe thing come vnto thee.

Thou goeſt farre from God, by adding and multiplying thy ſinne, ſo that thou deſpiſeſt or neglecteſt all good exhortations and warnings. Many goe farre away from God, not vpon the ſuddaine, but by little and little. For as many ſickneſſes goe before death, ſo many ſinnes goe before deſtruction.

Sinne by degrees.

struction. First a dislike of goodnes, and then a loathing, and so by little and little we are with-drawne from godlines, and vvee which heretofore were earnest professours, become key-colde in religion, and in the works of charitie. First Eue saw the forbidden fruite, then she desired it, then shee tasted it, then shee gaue it to her husband. Caine, & the brethren of Ioseph, first tooke a dislike, then came enuy, then hatred, then murder. Potiphers wife first lusted, then was not ashamed to open her lustfull intent, being denied, shee defamed him, and prouoked her husbands great displeasure against him, that hee was thrown into prison.

What it is to depart from God.

But how great an inconuenience it is, to goe farre from GOD, this example of the prodigall sonne doth shewe, who leauing his fathers house, founde nothing else but famine and misery. VVhat found Hagar, beeing out of Abrahams house, but vvant and sorrow. Gen. 16. They that forsake the Lord, shall haue great trouble. The Chickens that are in dangers of the Kite, so long as they flock about the Henne are safe, but when they goe stragling, they are caught vp; So they that make the Lorde their refuge,

fuge, & are guided by him, they are in ſafetie, but when they depart from him, & goe far away, the deuill goeth about like a roaring Lion, ſeeking whom he may deuoure. 1. Pet. 5. VVhen Caine went away from god, there was no more account made of him, then of a vagabond and odious perſon. Gen. 4. 14. Behold, ſaith hee to God, thou haſt caſt me out this day frō the earth, and from thy face ſhall I be hid, and ſhal be a vagabond and a runagate vpon the earth, and who ſoeuer findeth me, ſhall ſley mee. This is the dangerous & fearefull eſtate of them, which committing ſin, depart from God.

But among many inconueniences and dangers, theſe that follow are woorthy the noting. First, they that depart from God, make but little account of him, which is the chiefeſt good, and from whom al bleſſings, gifts and graces doe proceede. For great things, when they are a farre off from our ſight, doe ſeeme but ſmall. The great maieſtie of God, to idle & negligent beholders, ſeemeth a matter of ſmall account, whereby the maieſtie of GOD is neuer awhit the more diminiſhed, but our corruption and naughty nature is made the more apparant. 1.

They

They that sell wares, forsweare thẽselues for a little gaine, making more account of a little siluer, then of Gods commandement. And because our loue is more set vppon these worldly and transitory thinges then vpon God, therefore is God so slenderlie regarded. The Apostle S. Paule, because hee made so slender account of this world, therefore he truly said, I account all things but dung: and when hee maketh mention of God, hee speaketh with great reuerence. Tit. 2. 13. Looking (saith he) for the blessed hope, and appearing of the glory of the mightie GOD. Hebr. 12. 29. Our God is euen a consuming fire. So likewise in the psalmes. The Lord is a great god aboue all gods. psalm. 89. 6. to 10. Great is the Lord our god, and there is no end of his greatnesse. psalme. 47. 2. Hee is the great King vpon all the earth. verse 8. God raigneth ouer the heathen: God sitteth vpon his holy mountaine. psalme. 144. 5. and 146. And how is it that we make so light account of god, but that we prefer the least thinges in the world before him.

2. Secondly, as the further thou art from the Sunne, the greater is thy shadow, so the further thou departest from GOD, the

more

more art thou intangled with the cares & pleasures of this world, which vanish away like a shadow, and therefore may vvell be compared thereunto. They which hunt after honour, & greedily seeke after riches, they for the most part neuer catch thys shadow, neither are they pertakers of their desires, but followe after apparant deceits, and such matters vvhich in time to come shall yeeld no helpe. Therefore the Prophet, psalm. 4. cryeth out; Why doe you seeke after vanitie, and followe after leasing?

Thirdly, the Sunne when it departeth from any coast or Country, leaueth the place cold, barren, and vnfruitfull, & contrariwise, when with his cheerefull beames he doth cherrish the ground, all things begin to prosper and to bud forth: so when the sunne of our righteousnes, Christ our Lord, doth cheerfully shine into our harts and soules, with his heauenly and comfortable presence, he maketh vs to bring forth good fruites, and such good works as shall be acceptable vnto him. For his holy Spirit and grace where it lighteth, is wonderfull fruitfull. And that hart of man or woman, which vvanteth the heate of Gods 3.

Spirit, cannot bring forth any worke to eternall life, the seed that is cast into such an vnprofitable ground, will com to nothing. When the King doth come to any towne, all things abound, and there is great plentie, but when hee departeth, there are as many wants as there were before: so when Gods presence doth rest in our harts and soules, wee are prepared to euery good worke, but when he is absent, the doore is open to all vice and wickednes.

4. Fourthly, as the Sunne when it shineth, doth comfort all creatures, and when it is gone, there is nothing else but darknes; so when GOD is present, we are cheerefull and ioyfull, and when he is absent, wee are sad and heauy. In the Land of Egipt there was most thicke darknes, that it might be felt, but in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were, there was light: So where the wicked are, there is nothing but darknesse; they sit in darknes, and in the shaddow of death. They which forsake God, fall into the danger of the deuill, the prince of darknesse; and as farre as the heauen is from the earth, so great difference is there betwixt the grace of God, and our sinfull disposition.

The

The fift and last inconuenience of a sinner separated from God, is that when he is debarred of his mercy, he is presently subiect to his anger, and to his wrath. He that is farthest from Gods fauour, is neerest to his punishment. As may bee seene in the prophet Ionas, who flying from God, was cast into the sea. He fled from God, when hee commanded him, and fell into his punishment, when he thought least thereof. If thy sonne fall sicke at thy house, thou maist haue many helps to restore him againe, but if he be sicke in a strange country, hee is destitute of thy helpe, neyther canst thou doe him any good. The farther we are from heauen, the more subiect are we to the danger of hell. 5.

A weake and frayle sinner, although hee often fall, may be recouered, and the godlie vvhich pertaine to GOD, and are vnder his gouernment, they fall not finallie, but rise againe: but they which are past grace, which are hardned in wickednesse, and multiply sinne, for the most part doe perrish for euer. VVhereof there are tvvo notable examples recorded in Scripture, the one of Peter, the other of Iudas the traytour.

Peter denied the Lord thrice, but becauſe he repented in hart, hee was not caſt away, but receaued vnto mercy. Pſal.37.32. Pro. 24.15. But Iudas went far from God, and had rather be found among the enemies of Chriſt, then in his company. No maruell therefore though he died in his ſinnes, and becauſe hee went ſo farre aſtray, therefore did hee fall into ſo great miſchiefe, as afterward was apparant.

If thou haſt gone away from the Lorde, endeuour all thou canſt to returne vnto him againe; which thou ſhalt moſt readily performe, if thou dooſt returne the ſame way thou wenteſt from him, Eph. 4. Caſt off lying, and ſpeake euery man truth vnto his neighbour; hee that hath ſtolne, let him ſteale no more, but rather labour, and worke with his handes, the thing which is good, that hee may haue to giue to him that needeth. Let the proude learne to bee humble, the drunkard to be ſober, the riotous to be chaſt, the miſers to be charitable. If we haue gone away from God, let vs approch vnto him by a reformed lyfe, holy manners, & holy conuerſation. That it may be ſpoken of vs, as Paule ſpeaketh of the Ephesians, chap.2. Ye which were a

farre

farre of, are made neere. But more God-willing shall be saide heereof, when vvee shall speake of the returne of the prodigall Sonne.

Nowe let vs come to the third principall poynt, namely, what the prodigall Sonne did in a strange country, and how hee behaued himselfe, & that was loosly enough, for hee spent his patrimony riotously and wastfully. When this youngster had receaued his patrimony, he was so prickt vp in pride, that hee thought himselfe a Lord or a King, to doe what him listed, and abroade he must to shewe his brauery. His Fathers house could not holde him, his licentious will and loose liberty set him forward, the deuill beeing at his elbow to tell him what a iolly fellow hee was; and the deuils workmen, euill companions, set this matter abroach, to bring him & his estate, rather to confusion then to perfection, to woe then to happines. And now this sorrowfull game begins, and his shame is set out to euery mans view, for he consumed all his goods among harlots.

3. What hee did in a strange country.

And there he wasted his goods with riotous liuing.] Hauing receaued his portion, hee sets not himselfe to liue vnder anie

Wasted all.

ciuill gouernment, neither doth hee in any sort regard his credite, but as an outlaw, an abiect, and an extrauagant, and a wilfull waster, sets all at sixe and seauen, hee and his companions being like to the grashoppers of Egypt, that eate vp euery greene thing.

First hee spent all, and secondly among harlots in riotous liuing. Many a one through pouerty spendeth all, & some by debt ouerthrowe thēselues; some through suretiship are vndone, some are ouershot by sutes of law, some through sicknes and phisicke are brought to a low ebbe: some by fire are made full poore, some through shipwracke are cast behinde hand, and diuers are the inconueniences that fall out in the worlde, whereby a mans estate may be brought to nothing. But none of all these hinderances come through wilfulnes, for the man that feareth god, may be brought to all these hazards: but the vngodly vvaster hath no defence for himselfe.

By this departing from GOD, see howe the wretched sinner looseth all that he receaued, which was very profitable for him, to the attayning of euerlasting lyfe: As knowledge, vnderstanding and grace:

yea, hee spoyleth both his body and soule in this life, and in another. All the good deedes which hee hath doone in this lyfe, are by this meanes defaced, as though hee had doone no such thing. According to that we read, Ezech. 18. 24. If the righteous turne away from his righteousnesse, & commit iniquity, and doe according to all the abhominations that the wicked man doth, shall he liue? All his righteousnesse that he hath done, shall not be mentioned, but in his transgression that he hath committed, and in his sin that hee hath sinned, in them shall he die.

Tell me if one abyding among the Indians for the space of twenty or thirty yeres, & after returning into Spaine loaded with wealth, forgetting all his former labours and dangers, which hee vndertooke before hee coulde come to that treasure, shoulde wilfully in one night hazzard all at the dice or cardes, vvould not euery one in his company, iudge him not to be well in his wits? But the carelesse sinner is farre more foolish, vvho running into mortall sinne, dooth ouer-throwe the fruites of a godly life, 30. or 40. yeeres spent in prayer and fasting & almes, & many other godlie

exercises, and indangering the hope of a better life. Hee for a short delight, and by greedy couetousnes to gaine, looseth all in a night what hee hath gotten a long while, yet thou dooing the like betwixt God & thy selfe, art far more foolish. For he may returne to the Indians, and gette as much more, but the sinner cannot doe so, for the most part rather making himselfe the seruant of sin, then seeking to breake of the course thereof, & as the seruant laboureth for the Maister, so the sinner maketh himselfe a bond-slaue to the deuill, being altogether vnable to practise any worke to the obtayning of life euerlasting. First thou doost loose all thy good deeds which thou hast done: and secondly, thou doost bring thy selfe into that estate, from the vvhich thou canst not easily recouer thy selfe, and therefore none more vnhappy, none more vnwise.

With riotous liuing.

But howe did this prodigall sonne wast and consume all his goods? With riotous and licentious liuing, among varlets and whores. Which often falleth out among thē that are negligently brought vp, who when they are come to yeres of discretion, care neither for parents, nor maisters, nor

Magi-

Magiſtrates, nor theyr betters, thinking themſelues equall to all, and inferiour to none. They deſpiſe both the counſell and the company of thoſe that bee good and godly, in gaming & banquetting they exceede, ſpending that moſt careleſly and lewdly, which their parents gathered together with carke and care.

Whoredom

This prodigall child waſted all in wantonnes and whoring, which vice conſumeth the gold of grace, and the power and ſtrength of nature; weakening the bodie, diſturbing reaſon, making the wit & vnderſtanding very dull, ſpoyling vs of money, honour, of temporall benefits & bleſſings, and of eternall happines, and bringing vs vnto vtter ouerthrow & confuſion. Therefore Salomon ſaith, hee that nouriſheth a whore, waſteth his ſubſtance. Pro. 29. 3. and he that loueth feaſting, ſhall die a begger. Therefore it is compared vnto fire that deuoureth all, waſting our welth, conſuming the body, and deſtroying the ſoule. This ſinne prouoked GOD to deſtroy the world with water, & to conſume Sodome, and other Citties thereto adioyning with fire and brimſtone. The Sichemites and Beniamites for this, were put to

the ſword. Abſolon killed his brother Ammon at a banquet, for defiling his ſiſter. Through this Salomon was driuen to idolatry, Sampſon loſt his eyes with ſhame and diſcredite, Dauid felt the ſmart heereof, his children committing inceſt & murder, to his great griefe to heare of it. Thys cauſed the two wicked Iudges to bee ſtoned to death, and for this offence there fel in one day 23. thouſand of the people of Iſraell. VVhereby wee may gather howe great this ſin is, that had ſo great puniſhment, and whereof in the Scripture there are ſo many fearefull examples. Our Sauiour Chriſt ſuffered many ſinnes among his diſciples, but not this. He bore with the vnbeleefe of Thomas and of the reſt, ſuffered theyr pride and ambition, when they ſtroue who ſhould be the greateſt; when they called for fire from heauen, to cōſume the Samaritans, and to be reuenged of thē, hee gently reproued them. When they enuied at others, for caſting out deuils in his Name, he did not ſo greatly rebuke them. The couetouſnes of Iudas, nay his treaſon, Chriſt did freendly forwarne him of. Peter denied him, and forſwore him, and yet he reſtored him.

The beastlines of lust, he which feedeth among the Lillies could neuer abide in his company. And therfore his loue was especially bent vnto the Euangelist Saint Iohn, for his purity and virginitie. Hee is the seruant of the deuill, whose minde doth onely runne vpon beastly cogitations. And the Apostle, Gala. 5. doth pronounce of them, that they that are so carried away, shall neuer enter into the kingdom of heauen. This sinne is the fire of hell, the matter whereof is gluttony, filthines the flame, shame the smoake that ascendeth therehence, and euerlasting torments the ende and the reward thereof.

VVhen the deuill tempted our Sauiour Christ, hee did not once offer to intangle him by this meanes, knowing how farre it was from his nature; and how much he did detest it, the deuill was not so grosse, but he assaulted him with finer conceits. Thys sin destroyeth the body, shortneth the life, defaceth vertue, and is the manifest breach of Gods lawe. All other sinnes defile the soule, but this defileth both soule & bodie. Your bodies are the temple of God, and hee that defileth the temple of God, him shall God destroy. 1. Cor. 6.

Thou

Thou canst not auoyde Gods seuere iudgement, if thou doost impudentlie abuse the Temple of God. But nowe thys cursed plague hath spredde it selfe ouer all the worlde. Lots daughters are counted most infamous, but I feare mee there are some which are more woorthy of shame, which in the sight of the worlde are counted chast. They required onely to preserue seede of theyr Father, but many wiues follow lust too greedily, more then to haue children; beside, many other shameful behauiours vnknowne to the world, wherof their conscience no doubt doth accuse thē. Let them call for mercy and forgiuenesse, and endeuour chastity, without the which none shall see God. The female among beasts hauing conceaued, doe neuer suffer the male to come neere them: Thus the vnreasonable creatures teach vs, that make great account of Christianitie, to be sober, temperate, and chast. God forbid that all should so be affected; and they that are so ouertaken, may learne to amend for shame of themselues, and feare of eternal punishment.

Remedies of lust.

This sin is ouer-come by flying from it, as the Apostle counselleth. 1. Corin. 6. 18.

Fly

Fly fornication. All other ſinnes are ouer-
come by fighting, this only by flying. It is 1.
not good to fight with that enemy which
taketh ſtrength by thy preſence. Howe
ſhall that King fight with his enemie, that
hath traytours in his army? And when we
fight againſt riot & whoredome, our own
body and ſinfull fleſh is ready to take part
againſt vs. Another remedy of thys ſin is, 2.
the remembrance of hel fire, wherein lewd
perſons ſhall bee tormented. It is a harde
thing to reſiſt thy tentation, but more hard
to endure hell torments. But as the grea-
ter fire ouercommeth the leſſer, ſo let hell
fire put out the flame of fleſhly luſt.

A third remedy is repentance, with a ful 3.
and reſolute endeuour of all amendment.
A fourth remedy is the practiſe of al good 4.
workes, walking in an honeſt vocation,
prayer, and faſting. Fire is quenched by
water, & by humble teares, all fleſhlie luſts
are waſhed and wiped away. This ſinne
(as all other ſinnes) is not in our power to
refraine or ouercome: the Lord therefore
giue vs his grace, and of his goodnes alter
the power of our wicked nature. And that
wee cannot doe, the Lorde will bring to
paſſe in our behalfe, if wee earneſtly ſeeke
his

his helpe by prayer, and that comfort and strength which Paul had, the ſame ſhal we haue; My grace is ſufficient for thee. To theſe helps may other alſo bee added, to keepe our ſelues as much as may be, out of the companie of Women, according to that verſe, *Carpit enim vires paulatim vritq́; videndo fœmina.* Againe, to ſettle our ſelues to ſtudie and earneſt meditation, & to vſe our ſelues to hard fare, and hard lodging:

Sine cerere, et Baccho friget Venus.

And this is it which the Apoſtle ſpeaketh of, 1. Cor. 9. 27. I beate downe my bodie, and bring it into ſubiection.

By this prodigall ſonne wee are taught, into how great miſery, a fooliſh and ſelfe-willed man or woman is brought vnto, by following their owne vnbrideled will. He was wealthy, ſounde, and in eſpeciall account in his fathers houſe, but euery one ſeeth into howe great pouerty and miſerie hee is brought; in following his owne ſwinge and ſway, hee loſt all that euer hee had, and of a wealthy man and in high degree, became moſt vnhappy and of baſe account, being pinched with pouerty for his aboundance, hauing rags for his robes, and beeing inforced to eate huskes vvith

Swine,

Swine, which before could away with nothing but delicates and dainties. VVe see also vvhat is his reward which forsaketh the Lord; as also what his practise is that is left vnto himselfe, becomming worse & worse, and falling from one sin into another. Marke also howe the number of sins increase daily, vntill they haue altogether ouer-whelmed vs. We learne also vvhat a horrible iudgement and miserable condition remaineth to him whom GOD giueth ouer, and vvho is thus left to himselfe. On the contrary, what a great ioy & comfort it is, to be vnder Gods direction and tuition, the which onely keepeth vs from sinne, from danger, and from eternall death.

They that are not vnder Gods guiding, and vnder his safegarde, howe great are theyr miseries? and into howe manie inconueniences doe they fall, howe manie mischiefes and calamities doe light vppon them. Thys prodigall Sonne lost all, spent his goods riotouslie among harlots, and beeing driuen to great pouertie, was almost starued to death by famine. And heere-hence followeth the fourth matter worthie of noting and remembrance,

to

4. to wit, what ensued in those daies, after he had spent all. There followed a famine & miserable scarcetie.

Now.&c. Now when he had spent all, there arose a great dearth throughout the Land, and hee began to bee in necessitie.] This is the end of riotous & maisterfull youth, which quickly consume all and come vnto great miseries, if not lamentable ends. Wherefore, it is the duty of the parents, to bring vp theyr chyldren in the instruction & information of the Lord, Ephe. 6. 4. And if their education proue well, and their children bee of good gouernment, so much they haue got and gained, as also they, are to giue GOD thankes that hath giuen so good successe. But if the contrary fall out, this crosse and affliction is patiently to bee indured, and the parents are in the meane time to content and comfort themselues, that in dooing theyr best endeuour, they haue discharged theyr dutie. Ezech. 3. 19. For often times it falls out, not onely to slothfull and negligent parents, but also to those that are most watchfull & carefull, that they may haue chyldren wicked and vngodly, farre differing from the disposition of the parents. And the more worthy

and godly the Parents are, the more are they vexed with this affliction, as Adam had Caine, and Noe had Cham, & Abraham had Ismaell, and Isaac had Esau, and Dauid had Absolon & Ammon, Eli had Hophni and Phinehas, and Samuell had sonnes giuen to corruption and bribery, all which did greatly disgrace theyr Fathers houses, stocke and linage.

In this prodigall Sonne, although hee were so forgone, yet God doth not vtterly forsake him, but reacheth him out the hand of mercy, & sheweth him the means of repentance. First, in setting before his eyes his pouerty and misery, and then pinching him with famine, that by his rods & chastisements, he might draw him to newnesse and amendement: Ose, 2. 9. And worthily hee began to want, to whom the treasure of knowledge and wisedome, and of the feare of God, did seeme a matter so base, preferring his own pleasures, and the vanities of the world before it, & who had forsaken the high estimation of heauenlie wealth. Hee that leaueth the well-spring, must needes thirst, and hee that departeth from treasure, must needs want, & he that emptieth himselfe of honestie & goodnes,

must needes come to nothing. Hee began to want & suffer hunger, because nothing can satis-fie a prodigall minde: and hee is woorthy to bee famished which will not feede of heauenly foode. Where-soeuer Ioseph went there was plenty, and where he was not, there was scarcety enough. So where God is, there is no want, and where his helping hand is not, it is no maruell though all come to hauock & ruine.

Three things are heere woorthy to be considered. First, that without God there
1. is nothing but famine and penury. Se-
2. condly, that nothing can satis-fie our soules
3. but God. Thirdly, how in God onely, & not else-where, men & all other creatures, finde all plenty and aboundance. Psal. 34. The Lyons want and suffer hunger, but they that feare the Lord, want no manner of thing that is good. psal. 23. The Lorde is my Shepheard, therefore can I lacke nothing. And there is no Prince nor Potentate in the worlde that can say so. For the greater theyr estate, the greater theyr expences, and vpon infinite expences come great wants. Onely the godly mind, which liueth in a contented estate, hath this suf-

ficiencie. The sheepe ouer whō the deuill is shepheard, haue noysome hearbes to feede on, and venomous water to drinke, which secretly infect vnto death. For honours pleasures and riches bring destruction to the soule of a sinner, they deceiue vs of eternall life, and keepe vs farre from it.

He that is sicke of the Dropsie is still athirst, and wealth and pleasure still call for more. psal. 145. 15. The eyes of all waite vpon thee, ô Lord, and thou giuest them theyr meate in due season. Coniurers can sette aboundance of dainty meates before thine eyes, but if thou touch to tast, there is nothing but onely the deceit of the eyes, which for a time they can wonderfully delude. So the deceauable worlde, can perswade her followers, that all her gyfts are of great waight, and that they are sufficient to satis-fie our desire to the vttermost, but in the end they prooue to bee vaine, more vnconstant then the wind, and lighter then vanitie it selfe. And this is a most true cause, why sinners can neuer bee satis-fied and finde them-selues contented. Hee that is a Husbandman, woulde be a gentleman, a gentleman a squire, a squire

a Knight, a Knight a Lorde, a Lorde an Earle. So are all the desires of the world, they stirre vp hunger, but they neuer satis-fie hunger, or quench thirst. Therefore the prophet truly speaketh of such: Yee haue eaten, and haue not enough, ye haue drunke and are thirstie, ye clothe you, and are not warme, he that earneth wages, putteth the wages into a broken bagge. The water that was poured about the Altar, was burnt vp. 1. Reg. 18. Ionas gourde withered: so in all the pleasures & profits in the world, there is a worme ingendered within them, that dooth consume them. The more thou hast of this worlds goods, the more doth the fire of thy desire breake forth into a flame, as if thou shouldest endeuour to put out fire with oyle.

2. Secondly, nothing can satis-fie our mindes but God, as the prodigall Sonne was neuer quiet in mind, vntill he returned vnto his Fathers house. There is no ioy or perfection but in God. As God speaketh by the mouth of the prophet, psalme. 81. Open thy mouth wide, and I shall fill it. After that God did commaund vnto the people, the keeping of his commaundements, he willeth thē to opē their mouth

wide,

wide, & he will fill it. Which is not meant of the mouth of the body, which a little may fill, but of the contentation of the soule, which is not easily satisfied. The soule beeing made to the image of God, must then be in his best perfection, when God doth begin to renue it. In God onely is sufficiency, rest, quietnesse, and perfect ioy: without GOD there is nothing but greefe and perplexity of minde, which increaseth and multiplyeth, while wee make that account of the world as wee doe, seeking our rest and chiefest solace therein. That vessell which is put into the vvater, is very light, but being taken out, is very heauie: So, so long as thy minde doth rest in God, all thinges are comfortable and ioyfull, but when it is plunged in worldly desires, all things seeme sad and sorrowfull.

The vngodly beeing weary in seruing the worlde, are most combersome vnto themselues, hauing a clogged soule, and a heauy conscience. For honours, wealth & pleasure, they haue not so glistering a shew, but they haue as many dangers ioyned with them. The godly in theyr chiefest perplexities, miseries and distresses, haue rest and ioy in God, who filleth their

his helpe by prayer, and that comfort and strength which Paul had, the same shal we haue; My grace is sufficient for thee. To these helps may other also bee added, to keepe our selues as much as may be, out of the companie of Women, according to that verse, *Carpit enim vires paulatim vritq; videndo fœmina.* Againe, to settle our selues to studie and earnest meditation, & to vse our selues to hard fare, and hard lodging:

Sine cerere, et Baccho friget Venus.

And this is it which the Apostle speaketh of, 1. Cor. 9. 27. I beate downe my bodie, and bring it into subiection.

By this prodigall sonne wee are taught, into how great misery, a foolish and selfe-willed man or woman is brought vnto, by following their owne vnbrideled will. He was wealthy, sounde, and in especiall account in his fathers house, but euery one seeth into howe great pouerty and miserie hee is brought; in following his owne swinge and sway, hee lost all that euer hee had, and of a wealthy man and in high degree, became most vnhappy and of base account; being pinched with pouerty for his aboundance, hauing rags for his robes, and beeing inforced to eate huskes vvith

Swine,

Swine, which before could away with nothing but delicates and dainties. VVe see also vvhat is his reward which forsaketh the Lord; as also what his practise is that is left vnto himselfe, becomming worse & worse, and falling from one sin into another. Marke also howe the number of sins increase daily, vntill they haue altogether ouer-whelmed vs. We learne also vvhat a horrible iudgement and miserable condition remaineth to him whom GOD giueth ouer, and vvho is thus left to himselfe. On the contrary, what a great ioy & comfort it is, to be vnder Gods direction and tuition, the which onely keepeth vs from sinne, from danger, and from eternall death.

They that are not vnder Gods guiding, and vnder his safegarde, howe great are theyr miseries? and into howe manie inconueniences doe they fall, howe manie mischiefes and calamities doe light vppon them. Thys prodigall Sonne lost all, spent his goods riotouslie among harlots, and beeing driuen to great pouertie, was almost starued to death by famine. And heere-hence followeth the fourth matter worthie of noting and remembrance,

to

to wit, what ensued in those daies, after he had spent all. There followed a famine & miserable scarcetie.

Now.&c. Now when he had spent all, there arose a great dearth throughout the Land, and hee began to bee in necessitie.] This is the end of riotous & maisterfull youth, which quickly consume all and come vnto great miseries, if not lamentable ends. Wherefore, it is the duty of the parents, to bring vp theyr chyldren in the instruction & information of the Lord, Ephe. 6. 4. And if their education proue well, and their children bee of good gouernment, so much they haue got and gained, as also they, are to giue GOD thankes that hath giuen so good successe. But if the contrary fall out, this crosse and affliction is patiently to bee indured, and the parents are in the meane time to content and comfort themselues, that in dooing theyr best endeuour, they haue discharged theyr dutie. Ezech. 3. 19. For often times it falls out, not onely to slothfull and negligent parents, but also to those that are most watchfull & carefull, that they may haue chyldren wicked and vngodly, farre differing from the disposition of the parents. And the more worthy

and godly the Parents are, the more are they vexed with this affliction, as Adam had Caine, and Noe had Cham, & Abraham had Ismaell, and Isaac had Esau, and Dauid had Absolon & Ammon, Eli had Hophni and Phinehas, and Samuell had sonnes giuen to corruption and bribery, all which did greatly disgrace theyr Fathers houses, stocke and linage.

In this prodigall Sonne, although hee were so forgone, yet God doth not vtterly forsake him, but reacheth him out the hand of mercy, & sheweth him the means of repentance. First, in setting before his eyes his pouerty and misery, and then pinching him with famine, that by his rods & chastisements, he might draw him to newnesse and amendement: Ose, 2. 9. And worthily hee began to want, to whom the treasure of knowledge and wisedome, and of the feare of God, did seeme a matter so base, preferring his own pleasures, and the vanities of the world before it, & who had forsaken the high estimation of heauenlie wealth. Hee that leaueth the well-spring, must needes thirst, and hee that departeth from treasure, must needs want, & he that emptieth himselfe of honestie & goodnes,

must needes come to nothing. Hee began to want & suffer hunger, because nothing can satis-fie a prodigall minde: and hee is woorthy to bee famished which will not feede of heauenly foode. Where-soeuer Ioseph went there was plenty, and where he was not, there was scarcety enough. So where God is, there is no want, and where his helping hand is not, it is no maruell though all come to hauock & ruine.

Three things are heere woorthy to be
1. considered. First, that without God there
2. is nothing but famine and penury. Secondly, that nothing can satis-fie our soules
3. but God. Thirdly, how in God onely, & not else-where, men & all other creatures, finde all plenty and aboundance. Psal. 34. The Lyons want and suffer hunger, but they that feare the Lord, want no manner of thing that is good. psal. 23. The Lorde is my Shepheard, therefore can I lacke nothing. And there is no Prince nor Potentate in the worlde that can say so. For the greater theyr estate, the greater theyr expences, and vpon infinite expences come great wants. Onely the godly mind, which liueth in a contented estate, hath this suf-

ficiencie. The sheepe ouer whō the deuill is shepheard, haue noysome hearbes to feede on, and venomous water to drinke, which secretly infect vnto death. For honours pleasures and riches bring destruction to the soule of a sinner, they deceiue vs of eternall life, and keepe vs farre from it.

He that is sicke of the Dropsie is still athirst, and wealth and pleasure still call for more. psal. 145. 15. The eyes of all waite vpon thee, ô Lord, and thou giuest them theyr meate in due season. Coniurers can sette aboundance of dainty meates before thine eyes, but if thou touch to tast, there is nothing but onely the deceit of the eyes, which for a time they can wonderfully delude. So the deceauable worlde, can perswade her followers, that all her gyfts are of great waight, and that they are sufficient to satis-fie our desire to the vttermost, but in the end they prooue to bee vaine, more vnconstant then the wind, and lighter then vanitie it selfe. And this is a most true cause, why sinners can neuer bee satis-fied and finde them-selues contented. Hee that is a Husbandman, woulde be a gentleman, a gentleman a squire, a squire

a Knight, a Knight a Lorde, a Lorde an Earle. So are all the desires of the world, they stirre vp hunger, but they neuer satis-fie hunger, or quench thirst. Therefore the prophet truly speaketh of such: Yee haue eaten, and haue not enough, ye haue drunke and are thirstie, ye clothe you, and are not warme, he that earneth wages, putteth the wages into a broken bagge. The water that was poured about the Altar, was burnt vp. 1. Reg. 18. Ionas gourde withered: so in all the pleasures & profits in the world, there is a worme ingendered within them, that dooth consume them. The more thou hast of this worlds goods, the more doth the fire of thy desire breake forth into a flame, as if thou shouldest endeuour to put out fire with oyle.

2. Secondly, nothing can satis-fie our mindes but God, as the prodigall Sonne was neuer quiet in mind, vntill he returned vnto his Fathers house. There is no ioy or perfection but in God. As God speaketh by the mouth of the prophet, psalme. 81. Open thy mouth wide, and I shall fill it. After that God did commaund vnto the people, the keeping of his commaundements, he willeth thē to open their mouth

wide,

wide, & he will fill it. Which is not meant of the mouth of the body, which a little may fill, but of the contentation of the soule, which is not easily satisfied. The soule beeing made to the image of God, must then be in his best perfection, when God doth begin to renue it. In God onely is sufficiency, rest, quietnesse, and perfect ioy: without GOD there is nothing but greefe and perplexity of minde, which increaseth and multiplyeth, while wee make that account of the world as wee doe, seeking our rest and chiefest solace therein. That vessell which is put into the vvater, is very light, but being taken out, is very heauie: So, so long as thy minde doth rest in God, all things are comfortable and ioyfull, but when it is plunged in worldly desires, all things seeme sad and sorrowfull.

The vngodly beeing weary in seruing the worlde, are most combersome vnto themselues, hauing a clogged soule, and a heauy conscience. For honours, wealth & pleasure, they haue not so glistering a shew, but they haue as many dangers ioyned with them. The godly in theyr chiefest perplexities, miseries and distresses, haue rest and ioy in God, who filleth their

harts with great cheerefulnes, wheras without God, there is neither peace of conscience, nor any other true comfort. The bodie can take no rest beeing straitned in a narrow roome, and all the worlds delights are too strait for a godly soule, for it desireth to bee inlarged with that freedome which commeth from God, euen as the byrde which is fed with daintie meate in a cage, makes more account of further libertie, although hee be destitute of dainties.

Moses beeing in Pharaos Court, could not so well serue God, as when hee vvas quite cleere from it. Seeing thē there is no rest in these worldly matters, turne vnto God, and make a better choyce, & a happier change. When God made man, hee rested from all the workes which hee had made, so did he not rest whē he had made other creatures: Seeing therefore GOD rested in making man, let mans chiefest happines be in resting in God.

God filleth our desires with goodnesse, saith the Prophet, neyther is our appetite satis-fied vntill it enioy that vvished end. For our soule is of so noble a disposition, that it can finde rest no where but in the

the chiefest good. Therfore the holy king and prophet sayth, Euen as the Hart desireth the water brookes, so longeth my soule after thee, ô God. My soule is a thirst for God, yea euen for the liuing GOD, when shall I come before the presence of God. My teares were my meate day and night, while they daily said vnto me, where is now thy God?

Hee was absent farre from god, therefore he wept, hungring and thirsting after him, desiring to be replenished with god, that hee might finde all perfect ioy. And seeing the worlde cannot fill vp thy desire, betake thy selfe to Christ. Come vnto me ye that hunger and thirst, and I will refresh you, Math. 11. 28. Iohn. 4. 14. And I will fill the emptie soule with goodnes. Psalm. 36. Delight thy selfe in the Lord, and hee shall giue thee thy harts desire.

Hetherto we haue shewed, how that in the world there is nothing but famine and great scarcetie, and penury of all thinges; but in God onely there is perfect sufficiencie, ioy and glorie to be founde. Nowe let vs see a further reason of these thinges afore-sayde, and vvhy in the vvorlde is

scarce-

ſcarcety, and all plenty with God, which is the third thing to be ſpoken of. The world is not ſufficient, becauſe the large and ample capacitie of our mindes dooth further extend it ſelfe. The ſoule which was created for God, what-ſoeuer is inferiour to God, it counteth it but baſe. The pottle or the gallon, cannot bee filled with the meaſure of a pynt, & all the worlds goods, is but as a graine of muſtard ſeede in the belly of an Elephant; they fill the ſoule & ſatisfie the minde in ſuch ſort, that ſtil there is ſome place empty, ſo vaine they are and full of ſound (as empty veſſels haue a great ſound) & in theſe deſires there is no ſoundneſſe, no perfection.

Againe, the deſires of the ſoule are infinite, the profits & pleaſures of this world haue their bounds. So that there is no other remedy for vs in this life, but to remoue our mindes from the deſire of theſe earthly things, and to tranſport them vnto God, and heauenly conſiderations, that ſo our mindes and our deſires may fully be contented. For all other creatures GOD hath appoynted theyr foode, but God only is the foode of the ſoule. As graſſe for the Lyon, & fleſh for the horſe is vnmeete

foode, because they are not agreeable to theyr nature, so ought not earthly desires to be the foode of the soule. For there is nothing in the worlde to serue the minde, but onely God. Pryde, and couetousnes, and enuy, and pleasure, are the things that mens mindes doe most ayme at, but these are rather the famine then the foode of the soule. The grace of God, and the heauenly gyfts of his holy Spirit, they onely comfort and nourish the soule, and strengthen it. Why is breade rather the nourishment of mans body then poyson? The reason is because the one is agreeable to the nature of man, the other dooth destroy it. So is GOD the foode of the soule, because his presence and goodnesse is most agreeable there-vnto, beeing created after the likenes of God; as for all other matters, they are nothing else but death and famishment. And if thou feede the soule vvith any earthly considerations, it is as if thou shouldest feede the body with stones and grauell. As our soule without God beginneth to be sad, heauy, hungry, and dead, so all the delights, pleasures, profits, & commodities of this worlde, are nothing but misery & pouerty. The fift generall matter 5.

is,

is, the miserable estate of a sinner vnder the condition of the prodigall sonne, feeding Swine.

Then hee went and claue to a Cittizen of that Country, and hee sent him to his Farme to feed swine.] This is the best preferment, that we get by the deuils seruice. First, by our owne voluntary free-will we yeeld our selues slaues vnto the deuill, for the deuill hath no power ouer vs, till wee haue put our necks into his yoake. Which worke when we haue once performed, we are very hardly with-drawne from our vngodly purpose. And when the deuill hath vs in his bands, he then sticks too close vnto vs, neither is it as we may suppose, so easie a matter to shake off his yoke. Our wilfull disobedience comes not of ignorance or infirmitie, but of a froward and stubborne disposition, inclined to all wickednesse. And this is the difference betwixt the godly and the wicked, the godly falling into sinne, riseth againe, but the wicked continueth his course. Neyther can wee be likened to the deuill in nothing more, then in the perseuerance of sinne, in spending the best of our time so, and in waxing old therein.

The

The prodigall Sonne inforced by famine, went not to his Father, not that hee had altogether forgotten his Father, but that ſhame kept him back, which keepeth many from good purpoſes. He had rather ſuffer famine and baniſhment, then that he would once confeſſe his fault. Many had rather be vexed by the torment of conſcience, then in the ſight of God to humble themſelues, and to keepe a ſmothering fire within their breaſt, then to open theyr griefe to a godly friend, or faithfull Miniſter to haue eaſe & comfort. If thou didſt conſider the ſafetie of thy ſoule, and the quietnes of thy conſcience, the reproch of men ſhoulde neuer daunt thee, neyther ſhould the ſhame of the world euer confound thee. VVhat needeſt thou to care what the world thinketh of thee, ſo that thou be in Gods fauour, and be reconciled vnto him? VVhoſe diſpleaſure if thou couldeſt perceiue, neither the ſhame of the world, nor any other let, ſhould keepe thee backe from the due conſideration of thine eſtate. God knoweth all, & why ſhouldſt thou be aſhamed, to confeſſe thy fault before him? But becauſe either the ſhame or eſtimatiō of the world, doth more preuaile

Shame vnprofitable.

with

with thee, then the quietnes of thy conscience, or the feare and fauour of GOD; therefore art thou drowned in thy sin, sinking therein daily more and more.

It may be he thought his father so seuere and extreame, that he would not be intreated, or that all former charity or fauour, was banished from his breast, so that eyther by famine, or through despayre, hee was brought into that case, to be separated farre from his Father, and to yeelde himselfe into dishonorable slauery who before was free. But many are of so abiect a mind, that they feare there is no place for mercy, hauing so often repented, and yet falne againe, and despayring of amendement, they say within themselues; Many times haue I purposed to cut off the course of sin, and to mend my life, but yet I cannot, my sinfull estate is so strong; therefore seeing I cannot chuse but sinne, I wil for euer remaine therein. Little thinking their foolishnes is so great, that though we sinne against GOD through weakenes, not of presumption, if it be a hundred times, yet if we turne to the Lord by tru repentance, hee will so often forgiue vs. These fainthearted people, despairing of Gods goodnesse

Despaire.

nesse and mercy , and hauing no hope of amendement, cast themselues headlong into sinne, and yeeld themselues wholy into the power of sathan , perceauing thẽselues to be falne from grace, & from the fauour of God. This prodigall sonne, had rather suffer the most terrible tiranny of the deuill, then to endure some hardnes in comming to his fathers house, where he should enioy all freedome and wealth . Straite is the gate that entreth into life, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction . The Israelites had rather returne into Egypt, & to suffer the tiranny and persecution of Pharao, then to vndertake a little labour in the Wildernes, that they might enioy the promised Land , flowing with milke and honny. Such is the estate of many sinners, who had rather still be kept vnder the slauery of the deuill, then by confessing theyr sinnes, to receaue spirituall comfort from Christ , and to obtaine his grace and fauour.

He sent him to his farme to feed swine.] He is cast out of the Citty, which is an honourable place, and sent to base drudgery. The sinner is dismissed of heauenly meditations, and intangled in wordly busines, and

To feede Swine.

and ouercome thereof. Such is the course of most men now adaies, beeing giuen to worldly busines, marchandise, bargaines, and other affaires of this world, that they leaue no time to serue God, hauing theyr mindes herewith choked vp, so that they doe not so much as once thinke of God. Neyther doe theyr mindes runne vpon any thing else, speake, doe, desire any thing, but that which is worldly, temporall, and fleshly. In this sort mayst thou be termed a keeper of swine, which feeding thy body, doost suffer thy soule to starue. And as after the death of swine, there is no more remembrance of them, so of all these thy worldly labours, there shall be no profite remaining to thee, concerning an other life. For what shall a man get if he win the whole world, & loose his own soule? Our soule is that whereof wee ought to haue especiall care, and by the which we are reasonable creatures, and differ from brute beastes. But following our owne fleshly desires, wee become like brute beasts, and feede swine taking vppon vs a most abiect state of life, not whorthy to be called men, but to bee compared to refuse and dunge. To feede the eyes with beautifull shewes,

the taste with sweet meates, and the feeling with all inticements, what is it else but to feede the belly, the sences, and the flesh, as if with swine wee delighted to wallowe in dirt and mire. The place of Esay, chap.34. is notable, comparing mans ruinous estate to desolations, where in the place of corne, shall growe nettles and thornes, and theyr stately houses, shall be nothing else but an habitation for dragons, & a court for Ostriches. &c. This swinish people shall be like vnto the Madianites to Sisera and vnto Iabin, of whom mention is made, psal. 83.9. which perrished at Endor, and became as the dung of the earth.

And he would faine haue filled his belly with the huskes that the swine eate, but no man gaue them him.] By husks are heere vnderstood all other matters besides and without God, as pleasures & profits, wherwith we desire to satisfie our selues, vvhich are the iewels of this present world. For all that is in the worlde, as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, & the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. Which things the most part of the world do hunt after, and for the which they are so eagerly set, that they raise strife & discord: Iam.4.1.

and

and when they haue all doone, it is but for huskes, for vaine and transitory thinges. The daintiest foode dooth but fill the bellie, and afterward goeth into the draught, and the chiefest pleasures serue but for a time, & afterward damne the soule. When men enioy those pleasures which they would, they thinke they shall neuer haue enough, therefore is heere mention made, that although the prodigall sonne woulde haue filled his belly, yet no man gaue them him. The deuill will not fulfill thy appetite in the course of sin, fearing least when thou hast thy fill, thou shouldest forsake him, and detest his seruice, and betake thy selfe to the seruice of God.

The deuill sets before thee the beauty of euery woman thou lookst vpon, to drawe thee into his net. When hee hath caught thee, he keepes thee from the presence & sight of the woman which thou louest, least being satisfied with her loue, thou begin to contemne the sin, and to condemne thy selfe, and depart frō that sin and turne to the Lord. This is the deuils pollicie, to giue thee but a tast, to keepe thy appetite alwayes fresh, to hunger after his sauce, keeping thee still in slauerie, and making

thy

thy chiefest delight to bee a torment vnto thee. Pharao denied to giue the Israelites strawe, to make them more weary: Holophernes stopped the water springs frō the Bethulians, so that through scarcety of water their thirst was rather increased then quenched. So the deuill giues thee a taste, to make thee more hungry, but neuer satis-fieth thy desire, to make thee the more greedily to hunt after it. Thou refusest the fountaine of the water of life, and diggest vnto thy selfe vnwholsome waters, out of broken cesterns: thy waters stink through the vncleannes of thy vices, and taste full euill, through the bitternes of our conscience diuersly defiled. What madnes therefore hath entred into our mindes, that we forsaking the true and euelasting goodnes of GOD, should desire to be fedde with chaffe and with huskes, that are cast vnto Swine: especially seeing our creation is so noble, and that by gods word, and by his grace, we are chosen & called to enioy such excellent treasure in Christ Iesus. We being blinded, take huskes for dainty meate, which are rather prouided for swine then for men, whose stomacks can hardly away with such meate. Beware therefore seeing

thou art bought of Christ, with so high a price, and redeemed and set at liberty, that thou deliuer not thy selfe againe into the slauery of sinne and the deuill. Compare this present estate of a sinner, with that former wherein he was created, or where-in since wee were created, by Gods grace we stood.

Before vvee had a Father, nowe vvee haue a Lord, what said I a Lord, nay a ty-rant; before we were free, but now slaues; before was this prodigall sonne furnished with plentie, now is he pinched with scar-cety; before hee liued in his fathers house, now among robbing & destroying stran-gers; before hee was accepted among the sonnes of a kinde father, now is he cast out to dwel with swine, before he was fed with Angels foode, now is he glad with huskes, and cannot fill his belly. Consider this, & depart not frō God. But if thou hast gone astray, despayre not, marke what follow-eth, and thereby receiue comfort.

6. Then he came to himselfe, and sayde.] And this is the sixt generall matter worthy the noting, containing the effectuall con-uersion of a sinner, shewing where-hence it proceedeth, namely from affliction, and

the knowvledge and feeling of our ovvne misery. He came to himselfe, and therfore it is a token he went farre astray, and was in a deadly swoune of sinne, but being a long while in a trance, at last he reuiued. Erring in religion, & disordering himselfe in lyfe and conuersation, dooing those thinges which were quite contrary to Gods Law; now his returne is first begunne, in and by his vnderstanding; calling himselfe to remembrance, what kindnesse hee had in his Fathers house, comparing his former happines to his present misery, beeing not in so good case as his Fathers hirelings, and now hee entreth into discourse, & debates the matter with himselfe. He came to himselfe.

Esay. 46, 12. Heare mee yee stubborne harted, that are far from iustice. For there is nothing so farre from vs, as we are from our selues. Therefore men beeing intangaled and insnared in sinne, and giuen vp to the vanities of this world, are without thẽselues, and wander in the world. He came to him-selfe, vvhich was estranged from him-selfe: hee vvent out, & forsooke him selfe, and left hys Father, and calling himselfe to better remembrance, found himselfe, beeing lost vnto himselfe.

Considering his former happines, hee is raised vp with hope of pardon & forgiuenes for his offences; and now knowing & feeling his misery, he beginneth to be another manner of man then erst hee was before, bethinking himselfe how wel he was before, and howe vnhappy a change hee had made by falling into sin. The feare of God, and cōmon reason is banished, when sin commeth in place. Wee say that a mad man, or a drunken man, is not his owne man, because he speaketh and dooth those things which a man in his right wits would neuer do; but when he is sober and sencible, and hath left his foolishnes, then vvee say he is returned to himselfe. So hee that forsaketh God, and cleaueth to the deuill, is either mad or deuilish, beeing possessed with an euill spirit. Christ said of his persecutours, They know not what they doe, and Saint Stephen to the like sence, Lord lay not this sin to theyr charge. Whē thou seest a foole, or a mad body, or one possest, to raue, and to rage, then looke vpon thy selfe, who through sinne doost shewe thy selfe as foolish before GOD, as the other dooth in thy sight. If it bee a thing to be wondred at, to see the body possest with a deuill,

deuill, howe much more horrible is it, to thinke that the soule should bee possessed by the deuill. If it be a matter to be laughed at, & a thing very vndecent, that which a drunken man saith, or doth, how great is the foolishnes of that soule, that is left vnto it selfe, and hath not God for his guide. If it be a miserable and a lamentable thing to behold a mad man, howe much more vnhappy is that man, who neither lyueth according to reason, nor yet frameth himselfe to be ruled according to Gods word, and the direction thereof. Happy is that man which being recouered from spirituall madnes or drunkennesse, and from the power of the deuill, dooth come to himselfe. Hee runnes farre they say, that neuer returnes: & surely there be many that neuer come to themselues, forgetting God and themselues, not knowing that they are manicled and fettered, who if they were not too much their owne foes, might enioy most gracious and heauenly freedome. There were two vrgent causes, that prouoked this prodigall Son to come to himselfe. The first was his famine and miserie. The second the great plenty which was in his fathers house, which made him to

 breake

breake forth into these speeches, & to say.

How many hired seruants at my fathers, haue bread enough, and I die for hunger.]

Affliction. God sendeth sinners famine, that they may seeke sustenaunce from him, as also they may acknowledge theyr fault in abusing his benefits before, & that they may make the more account of them, when they are made partakers thereof. For if this prodigall Sonne had not beene punished thys way, he would hardly or neuer haue come to a better mind.

Many are the plagues and punishments which God vseth to make vs returne vnto him. Esay, 28. Affliction giueth vnderstanding. So after Moses had recited many plagues and punishments which vvere to come vppon the people of Israel. Deutronom. 30. 1. he addeth this. And it shall be when all these shall come vppon thee, that thou shalt returne into thy hart. Mark the vvordes how hee fore-telleth that they shall returne into theyr hart. 1. Kings, 18. In the tyme of Elias, the people through famine called vnto the Lord. Mathew 3. Iohn Baptist threatning the paines of hell, did in his time drawe the people to God. Nowe is the axe (sayth hee) sette to the

roote of the Tree: euery Tree that bringeth not foorth good fruite, shall be hewen downe, and cast into the fire. First Paule was strooken to the earth, & made blinde, before hee vvas wonne to the seruice of GOD, Acts, chap. 9. Hosea, 5. 15. In their affliction they will seeke mee earlie. Ieremie 2. 27. In the time of theyr trouble, they will say, Arise and helpe vs. psal. 83. 16. Make theyr faces ashamed, ô Lord, that they may seeke thy name. Psal. 30. In my prosperitie I sayde, I shall neuer be remooued. Then didst thou turne thy face from me, and I was troubled. Then cryed I vnto thee, ô Lord, and gate me vnto my Lord right humbly. All the miseries and punishments which here fall vpon vs, doe nothing els, but inforce vs to goe to God. Ezech. 7. 4. My eye shall not spare thee, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. 2. Chr. 26. Manasses being in prison prayed, & the Israelites bitten with Serpents knew the lord. Therfore Nehemias saith, chap. 9. In the time of their tribulation and affliction they cryed vnto thee, & thou heardest them out of heauen. Iudg. 6. 1. Afterward the children of Israel committed wickednesse in the sight of the Lorde, and the

Lord

Lord gaue them into the hands of Midian seuen yeeres. ver. 6. So was Israell exceedingly impouerished by the Midianites, therefore the chyldren of Israell cryed vnto the Lord, ver. 7. 8. And when the chyldren of Israell cryed vnto the Lorde, the Lord sent a Prophet, who willed thē not to feare, but there-with-all putteth in this Item, But ye haue not obeied my voyce.

As the mother desirous to weane the chylde, putteth some sowre thing vppon her teates, that by that meanes the milke may be forsaken: so GOD doth alwaies mingle bitter matters with the pleasures of this world, that we may grow in dislike of thē, which is a token of his fatherly goodnesse. Hosea. 2. The foolish man hath said in his hart, I wil goe after my louers, which giue me my bread and my water, my wooll and my flaxe. But the Lord in mercy saith, I will hedge thy way with thornes, that thou shalt not finde thy pathes. Though she follow after her louers, yet shall shee not come at them, though she seeke them, yet shall shee not come nigh them. Then shall she say, I will goe and returne to my first husband. Now she did not know that I gaue her her corne and wine, therefore

will I returne and take away my corne, in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recouer my wooll & my flaxe, lent to couer her shame. And nowe will discouer her lewdnesse in the sight of her louers, & no man shall deliuer her out of my hand, I will also cause all her mirth to cease. Afterward I will allure her, and bring her into the wildernesse, and speake freendly vnto her. What place of Scripture more significant to set forth this matter in hand. The Lord hath hedged vvith thornes, the way of that soule that departeth from him, as this prodigall sonne is pinched with famine & penury, that went from his fathers house. Wherefore he resolueth to goe to his former friende, where he was farre better before, as this prodigall sonne, comparing his former aboundance with this present want, went and returned. The dog when hee is hungry, looketh vp to his maister, waiting when hee will cast him somwhat to eate, and beeing full, begins to play the wanton: so for these transitory things of this world, we cal to God, and when our turne is serued, then eyther we play riot, or goe wandring from God. How profitable therefore is sorow, afflic-

tion and labour, which make vs returne againe. The great famine & hunger which the sonnes of Iacob felt, was the cause that they founde out their great friend Ioseph, and that their Father might receiue great ioy for the recouery of his lost sonne, and that they should confesse their fault, & say. Worthily do we suffer these things, which sinned against our brother, & did not consider him in his misery. Gene. 42. As this prodigall sonne returned to his Father, so his father first did giue him this grace, that he might returne, opening the eyes of his mind and soule, that hee might knowe his offence, and hate the sin, considering the great misery that should fal vpon him, if he did it not. This made him lift vp his soule to God, as Nabuchadnezzer did after his seauen yeres banishment among the wilde beastes. Then he rose and said, I wil goe to my Father, calling his former life to remēbrance, & sorrowing therefore, purposing afterward most stedfastly to amend. For they that resolue to continue in sinne, are not yet risen. Awake from sinne, thou that sleepest, and wallowest in sinne, and stand vp frō death, Ephe. 5. 14. He wisely considereth all circumstances, I am his sonne,

they

they are but hirelings; I do not onely hunger, but am almost famished, & they haue plenty; I am one,and they many; though I haue offended, yet my father is pittifull. My former life hath not beene so bad, but by Gods grace I may amend, & come into fauour againe. Which is well woorthy the noting, for many see theyr faulte, are sorry and repent them, and yet through the want of the hope of Gods mercy and forgiuenes, fall into despaire. It had beene no cofort to say, I perish with famine, vnlesse hee had raised vp himselfe to thinke howe many hirelings were in his Fathers house, who he fed to the full, so great was his bounty and goodnesse. Iohn Baptist threatned hell torments to sinners, but yet raised them vp with comfort of forgiuenes, & hope of Gods mercy. Behold, saith he, the lamb of god, which taketh away the sins of the world. Peter whe he had sharply rebuked the Iewes for Christes death, doth exhort euery one to repentance and to be baptized. *Acts.2.* Paul being striken blind, was willed to rise & to goe into the city, & there he should know what he should do. *Acts.9.* After Peter had forsworne Christ, & wept bitterly, he heard of this comfort.

Tell

Tel Peter also that christ is risen. Mar. 16.7.

Two things are heere apparant, the acknowledgement of sinne, and the mercie of God, feare and hope. Both come from God; by the one he casteth vs downe, by the other he raiseth vs vp againe. Considering the hirelings, this whetteth on his miserie, and moueth vnto repentance, in that his estate is farre worse then the hirelings, I had almost said then any mans else. Preferring the worst before himselfe, and desiring but the lowest roome in the house of God; as the prophet Dauid mourneth that he could not com into gods presence, seeing the sparrowe buildeth her nest by thy Altars ô Lord. Hee thinketh himselfe vnworthy to aspire to a high roome. Many of Gods children haue spirituall and temporall comfort enough, and I want, & am like to perrish. There are many in gods house, which serue God rather for feare of punishment, then for the loue of GOD. But better it is to bee a seruaunt in Gods house, then to bee a Prince in the worlde. The greatest part seeke after goods, and riches do imbrace, but Lord graunt vs thy countenannce, thy fauour and thy grace. psal. 4. And if GOD be so gracious and boun-

bountiful to them that serue him for feare, how much more tender care will hee haue ouer his owne children, whose hope hee will not make voyde, nor leaue their good deedes vnrewarded.

I will rise, and goe to my Father.] In that he saith he wil rise, he sheweth that he was falne, seeing none can rise but they that are falne; In that he saith he will goe vnto his father, he thereby confesseth hee went farre away from him. Calling him his Father, hee maketh it euident, that since his departure hee hath beene in the hand of a Tyrant. Heereby wee also perceiue, that a sinner can finde no comfort & refuge, but from him whom he hath offended. Finding no rest but rather great dangers in that course of life, for the choyce whereof hee forsooke God, now he decreeth to return to God, in whom onely is his lyfe and his hope.

The soule beeing made to the Image of GOD, can be satis-fied with nothing but God. Therefore the prophet Dauid saith, What haue I in heauen or earth that I desire in cōparison of thee. If a glutton haue a little meate set before him, he sayth, What is this for mee? In like sort the prophet

saith,

saith, psa. 16. All things in the world are nothing to him, I shall be satis-fied when he shal appeare in his glory & perfect beauty.

But wherefore doe wee desire so much the goods of this world? and hauing obtained them, why doe wee sette so little by them? because aboue all these, the comfort of God doth more reioyce the soule. Whē we die, we must leaue all our goods behind vs, but if we haue not the good wil of god, what shall after becom of vs? Againe, the care in keeping, and the trouble in gathering, and the feare of loosing our worldlie wealth, breed great hinderances vnto vs, & keep vs from the seruice of God, while all the roome in our soule, is taken vp for this golden guest, that God (who ought to be more deere vnto vs then golde, and all the treasures that we can deuise) cannot be receiued of vs. Eccles. 2. I haue made mee great works, & built me houses, & planted me vineyards, &c. yet for all this, Salomon pronoūced, that all was but vanity. He that drinketh of this water, shal thirst again, but hee that drinketh of the water of life, shall neuer thirst again. Ioh. 4. All the time that Iacob was in Labans house, he was intangled & wearied with many labors, but when

he was departed from him, hee met with a company of Angels. God is the fountaine of all goodnes, & therefore the soule desireth God, that it may inioy the same. Honor & riches are transitory, but the goodnes of God is perpetuall. Hee that is in his iourny, his minde cannot be at quiet till he com to the end therof, & he that maketh a long voiage by sea, is diuersly troubled, vntil he com to his wished hauen; & the chiefest end of man, is to be vnited vnto God. Vpon whō al our desires & wishes should be setled; for thou shalt shew me the path of life saith the prophet. psal. 16.12. In thy presence is the fulnes of ioy, & at thy right hand there is pleasure for euermore. There are not many, but one chiefe happines, and that is in God, without whom there is no happines to be found.

The knowledge of his offence, did compell the prodigall sonne to turn vnto god. Christ willed the daughters of Israel not to weep for him, but for thēselues, & for their owne offences. This acknowledgment of our fault & repentance, is of great vse, if it be ioyned with humility. So are euill matters turned vnto good, as the Bees out of sowre hearbs, doe sucke out sweet honny. Confession.

The

The proude Pharise lessning his faults, made them greater, and the Publican making his faults great by humble cōfession, did bring them to nothing. For after repentance and amendment, commeth forgiuenes. The one thiefe that was crucified vvith Christ, did not acknowledge his fault, and therfore was he condemned, the other with humility submitted himselfe to Gods mercy, confessing the greatnesse of his sin, and crauing mercy, therefore was hee receiued into Paradice. It is no small helpe to the Phisition, that the sicke partie doth shew his greefe, and where it lyeth, & can open & declare som cause of his sicknes, so shall he the better apply himselfe to worke his cure.

Againe, the bountifulnes of his Father, and the good vsage that hee founde in his house, made him not onely to thinke, but verily to purpose to returne. The image of God beeing defaced by sinne, cannot appeare but in those that are predestinate, & chosen to euerlasting life; there remaineth still an inclination to godlines, & a sighing for God; who although they be intangled in manifold sins, yet do they carry the portraiture of their nobility. As it may happen

Predestinate.

in

in a young man, who comming of noble stock, and through want of gouernment, wandereth from his Fathers house, & into strange countries, beeing out of apparrell, and base in the sight of the world, yet in his behauiour sheweth his breeding, that wee may say; Surely this youth commeth of great kinred. So may it be sayd of the predestinate, who although they fall into sin, & seeme contemptible to the eyes of men, yet doe they retaine an inward forwardnes to vertue and goodnes, whereby they are mightily furthered, that they may rise from sin. Furthermore, the remembrance of the great clemency and gentlenes of the Father, did prouoke the prodigall Sonne to set forward.

For our instruction this we may learne, not to sit one [illegible] in sin, but to rise & walke, that we may follow Christ. They that follow Christ do not sit, but as it becommeth the sonnes of light, they walke. Therefore if thou wilt followe Christ, thou must rise and walke in godlines and good works, & giuing good example, Math. 13. 44. Hee that found a treasure hid in the field, went and sold all that hee had. Wherefore let vs not sitte and continue in our vices; but as

the Hart which is beset with hounds, sigheth and mourneth the more, if he see anie man passe by, as it were crauing help and rescue: So wee beeing compassed about with so many dangers, call for helpe from Christ, who was made man for vs, and therfore hauing some tast, doth know our infirmities and dangers.

This prodigall Sonne comming to his father, cast in his mind what he should say, & so should we examine our consciences before we come into Gods presence. And also we may confesse to a learned and discreet Minister, and to a godly and faithful friend, that before them we may be humbled, & from them we may receiue comfort and instruction.

Father, I haue, &c.

But what is it that this prodigall Sonne hath in his minde to say, [Father, I haue sinned against heauen, and before thee. And am no more worthy to be called thy Sonne, make mee as one of thy hired seruaunts.]

7. Seuenthly is nowe declared, howe that Christ is our present Aduocate in our distresse and misery, when we call vpon him earnestly, vnfainedly, and in truth. Because through the humble sute of Christ, the prodi-

prodigall ſonne obtained mercy.

The hope of mercy & forgiuenes made him call GOD his father; for otherwiſe, through the deſert of his wicked life, hee coulde not imagine him but to be a ſeuere Iudge. And how could he, or can any of vs all call God our Father, but by the meanes of Chriſt, who hath ſatisfied for our ſinnes, and paide the raunſome with his own precious blood, and by that meanes hath procured vs fauour. Hee is the ſonne of God by nature, we by adoption and grace. Before we were ſubiect to ſin, to the deuil, to the feare of death & damnation, but nowe hath Chriſt deliuered vs from this ſlauery and captiuity, from this feare and danger. For hee hath ſent his Spirit into our harts, to teſtifie that we are the ſonnes of GOD. Ro. 8. to giue vs cōfort againſt deſpaire, & to incourage vs in the worke of godlines, knowing that our workes are accepted of him ſo long as we liue in his fear. col. 2. We which were in ſin, are quickned in Chriſt, hauing our ſins forgiuen. For he hath put out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was againſt vs, he euen tooke it away, and faſtned it vppon the Croſſe. And hath ſpoyled the Principalities, and Powers,

and hath made a shew of them openly, and hath triumphed ouer them in the same crosse. Eph. 2. He hath quickned vs which were dead in trespasses and sinnes, where-in in tyme past wee walked, according to the course of this world, & after the prince that ruleth in the ayre, euen the spirit that nowe worketh in the children of disobedi-ence. Among whom we also haue had our conuersation in time past, in the lustes of our flesh, in fulfilling the will of the flesh, and of the minde, and were by nature the children of wrath as vvell as others. But God which is rich in mercy, through his great loue where-with he loued vs, euen when we were dead in sinnes, hath quick-ned vs together in Christ, by whose grace ye are saued. And hath raised vs vp. Wee which were without Christ, and were ali-ants from the common wealth of Israell, and strangers from the couenaunt of pro-mise, and had no hope, and were without God in the vvorld, and were once a farre off, by the blood of Christ, are now made neere. For he is our peace, betwixt GOD the Father & vs in him we haue the peace of conscience, and boldnes towards God, as wee read. 1. Iohn. 3. 20. 21. If our hart con-

condemne vs, God is greater thē our hart, & knoweth all things. Beloued if our hart condemne vs not, then haue we boldnesse towards God. And what soeuer wee aske, we receiue of him, because wee keepe his commaundements, and doe those thinges which are pleasing in his sight. Now therfore wee are no more strangers and forrainers, but Cittizens with the Saints, and of the houshold of God. For through him, we haue an entrance vnto the Father. So that now we may reioyce in God, through our Lord Iesus Christ, by whom we haue now receiued the attonement. Then beeing iustified by faith. Ro. 5. we haue peace toward GOD, through our Lord Iesus Christ; by whom also wee haue accesse to God our Father, who onely hath brought vs into his presence, & arrayed vs with his owne garment of holines and innocencie. Heb. 10.22. Let vs draw neere with a true hart, in assurance of fayth, sprinckled in our harts from an euill conscience, & washed in our bodies with pure water, chap. 4. 16. and let vs go boldly vnto the throne of grace, that we may receaue mercy, and finde grace to helpe in time of neede. Through this comfort, that most vngodly

King Manasses, after the view and sight of his former iniquities, & hope of mercy & forgiuenes, was incouraged to com to god as his father. Thou art the most high Lord saith he, of great cōpassion, long suffering, and most mercifull, & repentest for mans miseries. Thou ô Lord, according to thy great goodnes, hast promised repentance and forgiuenes to thē that sin against thee, & for thy infinite mercies hast appoynted repentance vnto sinners, that they may bee saued. Thou therfore, ô Lord, that art the God of the iust, hast no appoynted repentance to the iust, as to Abraham, Isaac, and Iacob, (which haue not sinned against thee in like sort as I haue doone,) but thou hast appoynted repentance to mee, that am a sinner, for I haue sinned aboue the nūber of the sand of the sea. My transgressions, ô lord, are multiplyed, my transgressions are exceeding many, and I am not worthy to behold and see the height of the heauens, for the multitude of mine vnrighteousnes. I haue prouoked thy wrath, & done euill before thee. I did not thy wil, neither kept I thy commaundements, I haue set vp abhominations, & haue multiplyed offences. Now therfore I bow the knee of my hart,

besee-

beseeching thee of grace. And so foorth most excellently, as appereth in his prayer, set down after the 2. booke of Chronicles.

Peter went out, and wept bitterly, Mary Magdalen washed Christ his feete vvith teares, and wiped them with the hayre of her head. The Publicane would not cast vp his eyes to heauen; Manasses boweth the knees of his hart, beseeching grace; & the prodigall sonne, calling himselfe to remembrance, and humbling himselfe by repentance, and in great hope of pardon and forgiuenes, approcheth vnto GOD, saying; Father, I haue sinned against heauen, and before thee. The name of Father is a cōfortable name, therefore hath Christ placed it in the beginning of that daylie prayer, which he hath taught his disciples. *Our father which art in heauen. &c.* that they might the more boldly, & cherfully come before him, and what can the father deny the son, who taketh pleasure in dooing his child good. See also how merciful the lord is, who being offended doth not disdaine to be called a father, of great sinners, who haue mightily dishonoured him.

I haue sinned;] hee humbly confesseth his fault, neither dooth he excuse himselfe,

as Adam and Eue did, neyther doth hee lay the faulte eyther vpon his corrupt nature, or the deuils inticement, or euil company, counsell, or euill examples in the world, which might prouoke him thereunto, but onely vpon himselfe. For when we sin, it is more our own fault then other mens, for we are not compeld there-unto. Wherefore Dauid beholding the destruction of his people, saith, O Lord, it is I that haue sinned, but these sheepe, what haue they done. This confession of sinne dooth GOD require of a sinner; although hee know all, hee looketh for the voyce of thy confession. For by the mouth man confesseth vnto saluation. The sinner accusing himselfe, dooth preuent the accuser, and doth prouoke Gods mercy.

Father, I haue sinned,] not as other men, but my sins are more then the haires of my head. I haue sinned against heauen, as the prophet calleth the heauen and the earth to witnes against the Israelites. I will not go about to cleere my selfe, but I will plainely confesse that I am vnwoorthy of all fauour. These thoughts came not vnto him by the course of his naturall wit, and worldly reason, but through the grace of

God,

God, which altered his minde, and by the force of faith, which made him mount aboue all earthly considerations. For if hee had followed his owne naturall reason, he woulde haue saide, I did not vnderstand wherein I offended, neyther haue I done these things of set purpose, but foolishlie was I led away through ill company and bad counsell, and therefore there is cause why I should be pardoned. Which course if he had followed, he might rather haue prouoked his Fathers displeasure, then drawne him vnto mercy. Before an earthly Iudge our confession dooth condemne vs, but before God it is the meanes to procure our saluation. The Lord saith, Ezech. 18. My wayes are not as your wayes, neyther are my thoughts as your thoughts. Dauid, Manasses, Mary Magdalen, Peter the publican, and the thiefe, did humbly confesse, that theyr offences were greater then theyr punishment and therefore they obtained mercy, whereof Caine & Saule, and Achab, and other missed, because proudly and not humbly, they asked gods mercy.

I haue sinned against heauen,] because I haue made more account of earthly and corrup-

corruptible matters then of heauenly, as if a man ſhould more highly eſteem the ſeruant then the Maiſter. God hath made all theſe earthly things for the body, and the body for the ſoule, & the ſoule for himſelf, that it might learn to know him, loue, honour, & reuerence him. I wil praiſe the lord alwaies, ſaith the prophet, pſal. 33. and my mouth ſhalbe ful of his praiſe. Man throgh ſin is dumbe, and cannot prayſe God.

I haue ſinned before thee,] that is in the inward receit of my ſoule, where-into no mans eyes can pierce, but onely God aboue, & many & more hainous are our offences, thē are openly known to the world. As the prophet ſaith, pſal. 50. Againſt thee only haue I ſinned, & done this euil in thy ſight. He lay with Bathſhabe ſecretly, and more priuily did hee conſpire the death of Vriah, yet was it not ſo ſecret, but it vvas moſt manifeſt to God, there were fewe or no witneſſes, but onely God and his conſcience. Euery ſinne before God, is rather eſteemed from the inward hart, then from the outward worke. For out of the hart, come adulteries, murders, & the like. Mat. 15. And that thou maiſt know that Dauid ſinned priuily, Nathan ſaid from GOD,

Thou hast doone this in secrete, but that which I wil doe in punishing thy sin, shall be before al Israel. Ananias & Saphira sinned before God. We commit those things before God, which we would be ashamed to doe before a prince or noble man, yea, before any meane man.

I haue sinned before thee,] ô Lord my God, what small account haue I made of thee, howe little haue I regarded thee, I shoulde haue considered that thou didst looke vpon me,& behold my doings, that althogh I was much & long prouoked by my sinful flesh,yet the remembrance of thy presence, authority, & seuerity in punishing should haue restrained mee. Is God blind that he cannot see our offences. psal. 94.9. Eccl.23.18. He.4.13. nay our blindnes is lamentable, which cannot see our owne misery, vntill it be almost past remedy,and we in a maner brought to despaire, as our first parents in paradice, and Iudas after he had betrayed Christ.

The wicked Iudges that woulde haue defiled Susanna, woulde not behold heauen. Although sinners beleeue that God knoweth all, yet they suspect that he is not offended with their sins, or els they flatter

them

themſelues, thinking that they ſhall eſcape ſcotfree, becauſe GOD dooth forbeare to puniſh them. The forbearing of GOD, which ſhould prouoke thē to repentance, dooth harden them in theyr ſinnes. That the eyes of God cannot be blinded, let vs heare what the Word of God doth ſay to this intent, 1. Sam. 16. GOD ſeeth not as man ſeeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God beholdeth the hart. pſalm. 7. The righteous God tryeth the very harts and raines. He fitly & aptly ſaith, that God ſearcheth, for the ſmalleſt things that are, cannot eſcape his ſight, he ſearcheth diligently, as it is ſaid of the vvoman that ſwept her houſe & lighted a candle, to finde her loſt groate. The knowledge of God diueth into the bottome of the great deepe, Ecclus. 24. ſo that, that which neuer man ſawe, is manifeſt vnto him. Let no man think his ſinne to be vnknowne, neither let him ſay with the wicked Iudges, The Orchard doores are ſhut, and no man ſeeth vs. The Iudge of all the world ſeeth thee, before whoſe iudgement ſeate thou ſhalt ſtand. Many are like the fooliſh beaſt, which hauing his head hid, thinketh all his body hid to. Although we

ſee not God, yet God ſeeth vs, & is about our paths God willed Ezech. chap. 8. to dig through the hole of the wall, that hee might ſee the abhominations of the houſe of Iſraell. Then he ſaid vnto me, ſonne of man, haſt thou ſeene what the auncients of the houſe of Iſraell doe in the dark, euery one in the chamber of his imagery? for they ſay, The Lord ſeeth vs not, the Lord hath forſaken the earth.

I haue ſinned before thee,] ſo impudent and ſhameleſſe was I, & like a beaſt before thee, neither cōſidering thy ſecrete knowledge, nor fearing the power of thy manifold puniſhments, for diuers are the waies which thou vſeſt to puniſh offenders. I haue ſinned before thee, for thou onelie knoweſt my ſecrets. Man doth not ſee the hainouſnes of his ſinnes, till God do open his eyes. The deuill blinded our firſt parents eyes, to make them beleeue they were gods: but when God opened theyr eyes, they appeared to themſelues to bee moſt miſerable creatures, and to be aſhamed of themſelues, and their own nakedneſſe.

I haue ſinned;] plenty made him wilde and vnciuill, and like to a brute beaſt that hath no vnderſtanding, beeing altogether diſobe-

disobedient and vnruly, therefore came this misery wel vpon him, as a fit meane to bring him to repentance. So fit it is, that God by great extreamities, should violentlie breake our vnrulie nature, and that miseries and despaire shoulde pull vs downe vppon our knees, whom no other remedie can tame. And happy is that distresse, vvhich constrayneth a man to amend his euill life.

Thys tenor and forme of speaking vnto his Father, no eloquence or art of Rethoricke had put into thys young mans mind, but his owne conscience, beeing greeued and displeased with it selfe; and yet not vtterly conceauing an extreame ill opinion of his Fathers goodnes. For Gods mercie is not truly receaued, till harty repentance become an humble suter, which hath all his ground of cōfort in the hope of Gods mercy. And the confession of our sinnes, ought alwayes to be according to the nature of the offence; if publique, then publique confession: if otherwise, betwixt God and thy conscience.

Psal,32,5.

I am no more woorthy to be called thy sonne, make mee as one of thy hired seruaunts.]

This

This is one effectual note of repentance, when we are perswaded that we shall not be refused of our heauenly Father, but that wee shall obtaine mercy and forgiuenesse, although vvee be altogether vnwoorthy. Though I am not worthy to be one of thy houshold, vouchsafe me to be a hanger on. Vnworthy hee was to be called his sonne, because by sinne hee had many wayes defaced the Image of God, and now beeing farre vnlike vnto him. By sinne hee made himselfe the seruaunt of the deuill and of sinne. For of whom-soeuer a man is ouercome, euen vnto the same is hee in bondage. 2.Pet.2. 19. Therfore I confesse my selfe vnworthy of fauour, or to be vouchsafed the name of a Sonne, & humblie request that I may bee as one of thy hired seruants. So that prudent woman Abigaell, knowing that Dauid requested her to wife, 1. Sa. 25.41. saith, Behold, let thine handmaid be a seruant, to wash the feet of the seruaunts of my Lord. The Centurion said, I am vnwoorthy thou shouldst come vnder the roofe of my house. And for this humble cōfession Christ praised the Centurions faith, & granted his request. Luke, 7.8.9.

Depart

Depart from me, saith Peter, for I am a sinfull man. Yet none more worthy, then they that count themselues most vnwoorthy. The prodigall sonne for his humble confession, obtayned pardon, neyther did hee onely confesse his fault, but followed his matter throughly.

So he arose. So hee arose, and went to his Father.] Would God we did so rise from sin, when we purpose to arise. Back goeth he, home againe, weeping and sighing, whereas hee had before departed from his Father, as pert and fierce, as rash and wilfull as might be. All our life is passed in good desires, we purpose to arise, and yet wee neuer doe arise, that is, wee neuer settle our selues to performe good works, which are the fruits

Repentance. of true repentance, and of a liuely fayth. Many detest sinne, yet are they like to the doore that is turned to and fro vppon his hinges, and neuer moueth out of his place. What profit is it to purpose, vnlesse thou performe. Let vs walke while we haue the light, for the night commeth wherein no man can walk, but goeth far astray. While we haue time let vs doe good Gala. chap. 6. Seeke the Lord while he may be found, call vpon him while he is neere. It ought

to moue thee much, to make hast to turne vnto the Lord, because many are dead and gone, which purposed well, & neuer performed, had in their mindes to turne vnto the Lord, and yet neuer conuerted. This delay hath deceaued many, and the sinner that promiseth himselfe long life, cometh short thereof, taking vpon him to dispose of the time to come, which onely belongeth vnto God. Iam. 4. 14. Thou knowest not what shall be to morrow. It is not for you to know the times and seasons, (sayth Christ to his disciples) vvhich the Father hath put in his owne power. Acts. 1. 7. In the time of Noe, God cut of twenty yeres of those yeres, which he had graunted vnto the world, that they might repent, because they would not make vse of the time that God graunted. And if GOD did abridge the time which hee had promised vnto sinners, because they woulde not repent, what will he do to them, to whom he hath made no promise of any time. Yea although thou didst know, thou shouldst liue long, yet oughtest thou speedily to repent. For then is thy repentance more acceptable to God, when thou doost offer it in the prime of thy youth, & in the flower

of thy age. But they which delay the time to theyr decayed age, may feare least they drinke vp the dregs of Gods wrath. The best of our tyme we offer vnto the world, and the worst to GOD: vvhen as those things we offer vnto God, ought to be the choysest, and of chiefest account. Deu.15. 21. In the sacrifices of the Lord, they were commaunded to offer a male of a yeere old, without spot or blemish. Mal.1. They that offered the blind and the lame, were reprooued: Offer it nowe to thy Prince, saith the Lord, will he be contented therewith.

But why dost thou bestow thy best time vpon the worlde, and the basest tyme to God? How foolish were hee that were almost drowned, and shoulde refuse or delay to haue help. Late repentance is sildom true and sound, but rather inforced and counterfet. The rich man in the gospell, would haue repented, but it was too late for himselfe, and therefore he spake for his fiue brethren. So thousands after death, shall bewaile the time that they lost in their life, and did not repent, and nowe would, but it is to no purpose.

This prodigall Sonne, considering his misera-

miserable estate by sinne, and from howe great dignitie of Gods grace, he was falne, purposed to leaue the bewitching loue of sinne, and to turne vnto the Lord, vvhich as he truly intended, so faithfully did hee fulfill it: and he rose, and came to his Father. The same oughtest thou to doe, and to rise from thy manifolde offences, not delaying vntill to morrowe, for thou knovvest not vvhether thou shalt liue so long.

He came not to God of his own mind, but by his speciall grace hee was directed there-vnto. The especiall helpe vvhich GOD offereth vnto a sinner, to further him in the vvorke of repentance, is of two sorts. Some before, inuiting vs to repentance, some followe, and are inseprably ioyned there-vnto. Of the former sort, are Preachers, Sermons, holy inspirations, exhortations, and counsels of friendes, the feare of hell-fire, the hope of euerlasting life, afflictions, miracles, examples of others, and the like. For by all these meanes, God doth forcibly draw, & mercifully allure sinners vnto repentance. These helps, of many are called vneffectuall helpes, not but that they are sufficient to turne

Howe repentance is wrought.

the harts of wicked ſinners, or at leaſt to leaue thē without excuſe, but being made voyd by the ſtubborne and obſtinat mind of ſinners,who continue in ſin,with a ſtiffe purpoſe, theſe helps want their happy ſucceſſe. Of the latter ſort are the continuall good motions of Gods Spirit, which neuer leaue vs, vntill in ſecrete ſort they haue turned our rebellious will, while the goodnes of God, after a moſt louing and bountifull affection, doth make vs pliable to his will. So that now wee ſhed aboundance of teares, and are moſt willing and deſirous, to alter the euill courſe of life, & to frame our ſelues to all godly wayes. Theſe helps are called moſt effectuall, beeing ioyned with the worke of repentance, ſo inſeparably, that without theſe it cannot be, neyther can theſe helps be made voyde, ſeeing god himſelfe doth make them moſt forcible: Although theſe latter helps are moſt neceſſary, and that the former haue no force without theſe, yet the firſt are mighty perſwaſions, and moſt auailable inducements, for the ſtubborne mindes of men, are not wonne without manifolde occaſions and inforcements. This prodigal Son, had the former helps, as affliction, pouerty, famine,

famine, and misery, which did allure and exhort him, to lay aside his sinfull life, and to turne vnto God. GOD also put in his head, the remembrance of his fathers house, that calling to minde his former happines, from whence he was falne, he might with a most earnest desire, seeke to recouer the same againe, God granted him the knowledge of himselfe, and opened his mind to behold his misery, wherby he was brought the more speedily to returne. Whereby he gathered his wits together, and stirred up himselfe, and rose and came to his father.

It is to be noted, that there be diuers degrees to turne vnto God. First hee calleth himselfe to remembrance, then hee doth accuse and condemne himselfe for that sin and wickednes, whereunto hee seeth himselfe so much giuen, and so head-long carried away. Thus did this prodigall Sonne returne, beholding the miserable estate, whereinto he was falne, through his owne wilful will. This is that where-vnto the prophet Esay exhorteth, chapter 46. Remember this and be ashamed, bring it againe to minde, O you transgressers, remember the former things of old. So Ieremie, chap. 18. 11. Returne you euery one

The degrees of repentance.

from his euill way. Ioel. 2. 13. Rent your hart and not your garment: so likewise all
1. the Prophets. The first degree therefore, is to call himselfe to better remembrance.
2. A second degree is, to compare together the losse & the gaine, the good things we haue lost, & the euill which we haue falne into, therefore he sayd, Howe many hire-
3. lings are in my Fathers house, &c. The third degree is to rise, and to raise himselfe vp, and with a stedfast purpose to returne vnto God, & to confesse thy sinnes, as this prodigall sonne did effectually.

And when hee was yet a great way off, his Father saw him, & had compassion on him.]

8. The eyght matter worthy of our consideration in this parable is, the infinite mercie of God, which is not ouercome by the multitude of our sinnes, to remoue all despaire, where-into we are most easily readie to fall.

Behold a patterne of the gracious mercifulnesse of God, who hauing iust cause to be angry, yet when he saw this lost son, turned his anger into pitty and compassion. The Vulture seeth a carkasse a far of, then flyeth vnto it, then ceazeth vppon it, and

and lastly feedeth thereon. Christ saw this prodigall sonne a farre off, in the region of sinne, for health and saluation is farre from sinners, untill it please GOD to make it neere. Hee saw him with the eyes of pittie and compassion, as he looked vpon Peter, after he had thrice denied him.

God dooth not looke when wee will returne vnto him, but rather doth preuent vs with his mercy and grace. Therefore it is no doubt, but that when wee doe repent, GOD dooth receiue vs into his fauour. And if men, which by nature are desirous of reuenge, & which stand too much vpon theyr owne authoritie, yet through a fatherly kinde of affection, forgiue the great offences of theyr sonnes, yea, of theyr owne accord, vvill endeuour to seeke after them, shall wee thinke that God is, or will be more hard to vs, whose goodnes is infinite, & which far surpasseth all the kindnes that an earthly father can shew. Esa. 65. 24. Before they cry, I wil heare them. psal. 32. 5. I saide I will confesse vnto the Lord my vnrighteousnes, & thou forgauest the iniquitie of my sinne.

It is the mercy of the Lord, that wee are not vtterly consumed, as the prophet Iere.

spea-

ſpeaketh. When he was a farre off; that is, when he firſt purpoſed to return vnto the Lord. So ſoone as hee had a minde to be made whole, euen before hee made his moane vnto Chriſt, or knew what Chriſt was, this moſt louing and gentle Father, friend and Sauiour, made him whole,and bad him ſin no more, leaſt a worſe thing might befall him. And here is fulfilled that which God ſpeaketh by the prophet Eſay, chap. *65*. It ſhall be that ere euer they call, I ſhall aunſwere them, and while they are yet but thinking howe to ſpeake, I ſhall heare them. He did behold him as Dauid deſired, pſalm. *25*. 17. Looke vpon mine aduerſitie and miſery, and forgiue mee all my ſin.

God hath great care ouer the godly, euen when they goe aſtray from him, neyther dooth he ſtraight-way caſt them off. The prodigall ſonne coulde not returne, nor once conceiue ſo holy a deſire, vnleſſe God had looked vppon him, with a moſt gracious aſpect. 2. Cor. 3. 5. The image repreſented in the glaſſe, cannot lift vp the eyes, vnleſſe he whoſe image it is, doe firſt looke vp. Therefore that thou maiſt lyft vp thy eyes to heauen, thou hadſt neede

that

that God, whose image thou art, shoulde first looke down vpon thee from heauen, and cast the eyes of his mercy vppon thee, that thereby thou maist be drawne to lyft vp the eyes of thy minde, to him that looketh vpon thee. For vnlesse hee doe first, by a speciall influence looke vppon thee, thou canst neyther looke vpon him, nor be conuerted vnto him. Thou canst not rise and goe vnto him, vnlesse he mooue thee, and leade thee, or inforce and drawe thee. As our Sauiour saith; No man commeth vnto me, vnlesse my heauenly father draw him. Ioh. 6.

Wherefore, the spouse in the Canticles, acknowledging his secret power, & most friendly operation, prayeth saying, chap. 1. Draw mee after thee, wee will runne after the sauour of thy sweet oyntments. If thou doost not draw mee, I cannot come after thee. So the prophet Eze. chap. 2. 2. When God commaunded him to stand vpon his feete, the spirit entred into him, & set him vpon his feete, for vnlesse the Spirit of the Lord had holpen him, hee could not haue stood by himselfe. Lam. 5. 21. Turn thou vs vnto thee, ô Lord, and we shall be turned. So first he beheld Peter, and after he

wept

wept bitterly. The psal. 104. speaketh of God, ver. 32. The earth shal tremble at the looke of him, if he doe but touch the hills, they shall smoake. This is he which bringeth the lost sheep into his fold, who onely doth heale our infirmities, and hath mercy on our iniquities. This is he onely of whō Iob speaketh, chap. 27. God hath mollified my hart, and the Almighty hath put my soule in bitternes. God onely doth giue repentance. For as Saint Paule saith, It is the gift of God, 2. Tim. 2. 25. When he willeth vs, to instruct with meeknes them that are contrary minded, prooving if God at anie time will giue them repentance, that they may know the truth. So that the mercy of God is necessary, not onely in the worke of repentance, but before wee doe repent. According to that in the psalm. Thy mercy ô Lord shall preuent me.

Iustification.

All our endeuours are not sufficient to iustifie vs, or to reconcile vs vnto the lord, but that which is wanting in vs, the Lord most bountifully dooth supply. Some vvorkes pertayning vnto our iustifycation, are onely vvrought of God, yet must not we be idle, but doe our best endeuour. For as that body is dead, vvhich hath not

moti-

motion and stirring; so that fayth is not so effectuall, which wanteth good works. Some vvorkes of GOD goe before our iustification, vvhich doe not require eyther our consent, or our helpe and furtherance. Of vvhich sort are Predestination, Election, and Calling; to knocke at the doore of our conscience, by his secrete and most gracious inspirations. Betwixt these, wherby our iustifycation is begunne & ended, there are other middle works concurrent, as Fayth, Hope, Charitie, Repentance, & Practise of a godly life, which require also our endeuour. The free gift of Gods grace, and an abilitie to performe good-vvorks, is onely Gods gyft, which he doth most largely graunt to them, which are obedient to his holy calling.

When he was a farre off, his father sawe him, and had compassion on him; therefore the forgiuenes of our sinnes, and our iustifycation, is onely ascribed to his mercie. And that thou mayst perceiue, howe ready God is to forgiue sinners, to help & to fauour them, therefore it followeth in the Text.

He ran and fell on his necke, and kissed him.] In his foreknowledge, running, and embra-

embracing him, his great clemencie and mercy is apparant. His Father dooth not debate the case with him, doth not chyde and threaten him, but straight-way dooth embrace him. VVherefore they gather foolishly heere-hence, that say gods mercy is not ready for sinners, till they by repentance prouoke him there-vnto. Heare say they, our heauenly Father is set forth, to be most easie to forgiue, but not before the the sinner doe purpose to returne, therefore God dooth not vouchsafe any his fauour, before they seeke it. True it is, that the sinner may obtaine pardon & forgiuenes, that it is most requisite that he should be toucht with sorow of conscience, wherby he may be displeased with himselfe, but it followeth not therefore, that repentance, which is the gift of God, should haue his first beginning of mans owne motion.

And in this sort, farre vnfitly is an earthly father compared vnto God, for it is not in mans power, by the secrete instinct and working of the holy spirit, to renue and alter and change the hart of a sinner, and of a stony, to make a fleshly hart, Eze. 11. 19. and 36. 26. But the question is not heere, whether man being conuerted, of himselfe

returne

returne vnto the Lord, but vnder the person of an earthly father, Gods mercie is cōmended, and his readines to forgiue. The grace of God, which hastneth, & speedily worketh, requireth no delay. As the nurse seeing the weak child to set forward to go, doth presently run to stay him: So dooth God help those by his grace, to begin and continue in godlines of life, whom he hath framed therevnto. Iob.14. Thou shalt call me, and I shall aunswere thee, thou louest the worke of thine owne hands. The mercie of God is not slowe to them that trulie repent. As soone as we being toucht with sorrow, call vnto him for mercy and forgiuenes, he openeth the wings of his mercie, to receiue those that flye vnto him, that they may returne into his fauour; and be reconciled vnto him. How-beit, it falleth out most backwardly, that the more diligent God is to doe vs good, the more forward are we to all euill, and slow to goodnes. How hasty were the Israelites, to giue theyr iewels and earings to the making of a golden calfe, and to bad purposes we are liberall enough, if not too prodigall. But who is there, that to the releefe of a poore man, would giue his ring off his finger, or

golde out of his purse, nay scarce a poore penny, and what small helpe is a penny? Vpon whores and harlots, most vngodly we consume great wealth, but vppon our poore kinred, wee are loth to bestowe the least helpe. Vertue calleth vnto vs, & commaundeth vs. and wee are fast asleepe. and heare not; Vice and wickednes dooth but becken, and hold vp the finger, & wee run most speedily. We are hastie to doe euill, but slow to good works.

He fell vpon his necke.] VVhereby is declared not onely Gods loue, but his great care, in preseruing, guiding, and gouerning of them which turne vnto him, he doth cherrish and embrace the repentant sinner, with both his armes of mercy, loue and compassion. His left arme is the forgiuenes of sinnes, and his right arme is the promise of glory and euerlasting life. According to that of the prophet, Hosea, 11. 3. I led Ephraim, as one should beare him in his armes. I ledde them with cordes of a man, euen with bands of loue, and I vvas to them as he that taketh of the yoke from theyr iawes.

And kissed him.] Which signifieth the infusion of his heauenly grace, pouring

forth,

forth the greatnes of his affection, & shewing the effect of his heauenly bounty and goodnesse, toward a penitent sinner. By these sencible matters of embracing and kissing, more high and heauenly things are meant. By the kisse is meant the perfection of grace, because a kisse is a signe of perfect reconciliation, good will, peace, and loue, & therefore it is set in the last place. Great is the gracious fauour that God sheweth to man-kinde, for if hee should straightlie deale with the most godly, he should find matter enough to condemne them. But so exceeding is his mercy & compassion, that hee preserueth sinners, calleth backe those that flie frō him, gathereth together those that are disperced deliuereth them that are readie to perrish, quickneth those that are dead in sin, iustifieth them whose deserts haue been farre otherwise, rebuketh those that are negligent, stirreth vp those that sleepe in sin, raiseth vp those that are falne, instructeth those that are ignorant, bringeth back those that are gone astray, embrabraceth them that returne, and keepeth & preserueth thē by all means possible. Who soeuer therefore doth duly consider Gods mercy & compassion, hath no cause to distrust

The manifold mercies of God.

trust

trust and to fall away from God, but rather to be cõforted with hope of pardon. Why therfore ô sinner, dost not thou depart frõ sin, seeing that thou maist bee graciouslie receiued. For, at what time soeuer a sinner doth repent him of his sin, I wil put out all his wickednes out my of remẽbrance, saith the Lord. Howe ready is Gods mercy toward thee, that hee may graciously receiue thee, and crowne thee also with honour. Come out then out of thy prison, into this place of liberty, & if it be possible that thou canst wind thy selfe out of the slauerie of sin, thou shalt finde thy Sauiour vvith his armes wide open, most louingly and graciously to receiue thee, and also to prepare thee an euerlasting dwelling place in heauen, after this wretched life, and that more princelike thẽ any king in this world doth enioy. Feare not little flock, contemptible, base, & despised in the world, for it is your Fathers pleasure to giue you a kingdome. Why doost thou not stirre then from sin, beeing almost ouer-whelmed, why doost thou stand in dirt and mire, when thy feet may goe vpon cleere ground?

Some Father woulde haue taken vp his prodigall child very sharply, & corrected

him seuerely, hee woulde haue called thys spend-thrift to account, how he had spent his goods, how he had wasted his patrimonie, where he had beene so long as a vagabond. But beholde the great compassion of the father of this prodigall sonne, resembling Gods mercy to a desolate sinner. He dooth not aske account of him where hee was, or how hee had wasted his substance, he doth not reuile, neither doth he handle him sharply, but with a most mild & ioyfull countenaunce, and a louing behauiour, goeth out to meete him, embraceth, kisseth him, and maketh great ioy. O inestimable loue, & infinite charitie, & goodnes vnspeakeable. VVhat minde is it that would not burst forth in teares, what hard hart is it, if it were harder then the Adamant, which would not be mollified and relent, at so great kindnes and curtesie offred: Returne therfore vnto the Lord, who art farre off from him, it is his desire a sinner should liue, & he would not his death, how head-long and voyde of reason then is he, that will refuse life, and take hold of death. O Lord breake all our stubborne harts, and make vs to sigh & grone vnder the most heauy burden and waight of sin,

who are maruailously loden, & yet thinke our selues in great ease, and at great libertie. Make an end of thy sin, and looke vp to God who will ease thee. For when thou night and day doost thinke vpon nothing else, and doost set thy selfe to nothing else, but to offend and displease God, he dailie & hourely heaping vpon thee a thousand meanes of his mercy, waiteth for thy returne, and daily looketh for thy happy repentance. The happy remēbrance whereof, did make this prodigall sonne to say.

Father, I haue sinned against heauen, & before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.] Great sinnes, great griefe, but a short confession, and this is a waightie poynt of repentance, when with the sence, the feeling and remorce of sinne, is ioyned both sadnesse and shamefastnesse. And where there is not this sadnesse and shamefastnes, the sinner can neuer returne to goodnes. Therefore there must goe before repentance, a holy anger and inward griefe and discontentment, that wee haue displeased God. For following our owne wayes, we grow to great forgetfulnes, but returning vnto God, then are we brought to true remembrance.

Truly

Truly did the Apostle S. Paule speak, 1. Cor. 15. 9. I am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God, joyfully remembring gods mercy, and his own happy returne. For the more graciously the lord doth visit a sinner with his mercy, the more deeply doth it sink into the hart of a true penitent sinner, the more doth he hũble himselfe before God, & the more greeuously doth he accuse his owne wicked nature and disposition. The more cleerly that he doth perceiue Gods mercy and compassion, and doth behold his maiestie & holines, comparing there-vnto his own vnworthines, ingratitude, frowardnes, and his most sinfull inclination, the more doth he detest the same, & the more plainly doth hee confesse his fault. All vvhich matters, when the prophet Esay did euidently behold, hee cryed out of himselfe, chap. 6. 5. saying, Woe is me, for I am vndone, because I am a man of polluted lyps. Iob also, 42. 5. saith, I haue heard of thee, by hearing of the eare, but now my eye seeth thee. Therefore I abhor my selfe, and repent in dust & ashes. When the Apostle Saint Paule savve so much in him-selfe, Rom. chap. 7. he cryed out, O vvretched

man that I am, who shall deliuer me from this body of sinne.

The prodigall sonne, although he doth now confesse his fault, being receiued into fauour, doth not wish himselfe to be as one of his Fathers hired seruants, for now he serueth GOD more for loue then for feare. Before, knowing his wickednes, and fearing the punishment that there-hence might ensue, he wished that hee vvere but in as good state, as his fathers seruants, but now hauing sufficient triall of his Fathers great kindnes, embracing him and kissing him, and beeing glad of his repentance, with all readines and ioyfull mind, seeketh to please God, and to doe those thinges which are acceptable vnto him, regarding now that he was in the estate of a sonne, & not of a seruant. Not for feare nor for reward, but all that he doth, he doth for loue. And why should not hee loue him againe. VVherefore, the true repentant sinner, hath great cause of comfort, and not to feare, although present death were at hand. For whether he liue or die, he is the Lords. GOD hath sealed him vp in Christ his blood, vnto euerlasting life, so that hee neede not doubt, but that his name is writ-

ten in the booke of life. Luke, 10. and that he is in the number of those, whom God before the foundations of the world were layde, hath chosen in Christ, to bee his Sonnes and heyres. Ephesi. chap. 2. And that hee is the deerely beloued Sonne of God, and inheritour of his glorious kingdome.

God for his earnest fayths sake in the blood of Christ, hath forgiuen him all his sinnes, that euer hee cōmitted against him, from the day of his birth, to the howre of his conuersion. Hee hath cast away all his iniquities behind his back, so that hee will neuer remember them any more. And he may assure himselfe that hee is counted among them, whose vnrighteousnes is forgiuen, and whose sinnes are couered, and vnto whom the Lord imputeth no sinne. God loueth him, careth for him, is on his side, who thē can endomage or hurt him? Who can lay any thing to his charge? It is God that iustifieth, vvho can condemne him? It is God that reioyceth to doe thee good. No maruell then, that the father said to his seruaunts.

Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a Ring on his hande, and

ſhooes on his feete.]

9. Heere commeth the ninth matter to be intreated of, namely, the great ſolemnitie that God & all the holy Angels do make, at the conuerſion of a ſinner. His Father doth not ſpeake any thundering words of crueltie, nor threaten to beate him, or to caſt him off, nor to caſt him in the teeth with his bounteous goodnes ſhewed vnto him; neyther doth he lay vnto him his going away, nor burden him with his gluttony, or other abhominable poynts of lyuing, he remembreth none of all this geare, he doth ſo greatly reioyce that he hath got his Sonne againe. The Son thought himſelfe vnworthy the title or name of his ſon, yet the father reſtoreth him to his old ſtate and degree againe. The ſonne doth vtterly condemne himſelfe, and the father doth abſolue and quit him. The ſonne did caſt himſelfe downe to be a ſeruaunt, and the father ſetteth him perfectly againe in his old ſtate & dignitie. Him that had caſt him ſelfe into the bond ſeruice of abhominable maiſters, that is, the filthy pleaſures of the body, him did his father vouchſafe to embrace in his armes; to him that had deſerued to bee ſcourged vvith many a ſore

ſtripe,

ſtripe, is giuen a kiſſe, for a token of perfect loue and attonement. Happy is that ſinner, whō the Lord vouchſafeth to kiſſe and embrace, becauſe he confeſſed his ſins, and refuſed the name of a ſonne, for that in his conſcience he knew himſelfe faulty, there was brought forth the beſt robe, and reſtored vnto him. How-ſoeuer hee hath behaued himſelfe, ſaith his Father, my ſon he was, he hath beene dead, and nowe is he called to life againe. For ſin is the death of the ſoule, and hee runneth toward death, which leaueth and forſaketh the Authour of life. Hee leaueth and forſaketh the Authour of life, whoſoeuer is in loue with the things of this world, for the worldly pleaſures are farre wide from Gods ſchooling: And ſuch a one is reuiued againe, as dooth repent and reforme his ſinfull life. He was loſt without any hope euer to be recouered againe, if he had beene left to himſelfe, howbeit he was found and gotten againe. To depart away from the fathers houſe, is to perriſh, for out of the ſame houſe, there is no health.

The Father ſpeaketh not to the Son, but to the ſeruaunts, he that repents & prayes for Gods goodnes, receiueth no aunſwere,

howbeit

howbeit, his prayer is not without effect, for God graunteth mercy; whereof, although his wauering minde may doubt, yet hath hee the promises of God, contayned in his word to assure him, & the comfort of his holy Spirit, throughly to establish him.

Keyes of heauen in the Ministers hand.

The seruaunts are the Ministers of the Church, whom God vseth, eyther to bind or to loose sinners, according as they see the repentance of the sinner, eyther true or counterfet. That is, to pronounce by the warrant of Gods word, that eyther theyr sinnes are retained, or graciously forgiuen. Neyther is this priuiledge graunted onely to one man, as many do affirme, that it only belongeth to the Pope, but euen to all the seruaunts; that is, to euery Minister, of euery particuler congregation. Ioh. 20.23. By which meanes the Lord will assuredly comfort his hart, that hee hath receiued a reconciliation. Which doctrine is also confirmed by *Stella*, one that was wholy addicted to the Pope. For, saith he, when Christ put forth this parable, there were Apostles and other of his disciples, whose minestery Christ vsed to pronounce forgiuenesse of sinnes to publicans and sinners.

The

The most gorgious garment in the worlde, can but hide the sores and blemishes of the body, it cannot cure them, but the grace of God, doth not onely hide, but heale the most plaguy sores of the soule, and yet taketh no infection there-hence, no otherwise then the Sunne is annoyed, although the beames thereof doe shine into rotten and most noysome carkasses, and filthy places.

This is the best robe, & such a robe, that all the Emperours and Kings of the world cannot shew. This robe of innocency, our first Parents had in their creation, the same also is put vpon vs in the time of baptisme. But our first parents lost this precious robe through theyr transgression, and were glad to hide their nakednesse with figge leaues. So we likewise, by our continuall offences, disgrade and disgrace our selues, and in steede of thys worthy ornament, we all to beray our selues with dirt and mire, neyther are we washed cleane and renued, but by repentance, whereby wee recouer our wedding garment, and are ioyned vnto God.

Which thing the prophet Ezech. doth liuely & worthily describe in his 16. chap.

Now

Nowe when I passed by thee and looked vppon thee, behold, thy time was as the time of loue, and I spredde my skirts ouer thee, and couered thy filthines. yea, I sware vnto thee, and entred into a conenaunt with thee, saith the Lord God, & thou becammest mine. Then washed I thee vvith water. &c. Thus doth our heauenly father not onely forgiue our sinnes, in burying & putting quite out the remembrance of them, but also hee restoreth vnto vs those gyfts, which we had lost. As he dooth depriue vs of them, and take them away, punishing our vnthankfulnesse thereby, and driuing vs to shame, by the reproch of our nakednes. Now by these tokens of Gods loue, the true and effectuall forgiuenes of our sinnes is signified.

The father willeth the seruants to bring forth the best robe, and giueth no time of delay; for in this case, delay breedes danger. When a sinner in this sort dooth re-
Despayre. count his manifold offences, and is vexed with the torment of conscience, it is high time to yeeld help. for feare least through despayre he be cast away. There is no stay betwixt forgiuenes of our sins, and Gods grace and fauour. The health of the body

is

is not recouered but by little and little, because the matter is not of so great waight; but the distressed estate of the soule, must be releeued with all speede, that may conueniently be offred and affoorded. When the body is sicke, wee are meruailous diligent to haue health, yea, if it bee but the head-ache, we can suffer no delay, seeking for helpe, and calling for Phisitions, according as our power and abilitie vvill stretch. So after our sinne committed, we shoulde be as hasty to rise and to repent; but heerein euery little excuse stayeth vs backe, and wee are content to delay thys time of our conuersion, a great deale longer then we should, & so much the more, beeing intangled in wordly affaires, and altogether drowned in forgetfulnes. In so dooing, thou loosest the practise of good workes, and art troubled for want of the peace and quietnes of conscience. Repentance.

Againe, thou knowest not hovve suddainelie thy lyfe shall be taken from thee. The humble confession of thy fault, is the happy entrance to obtaine Gods mercie. VVash you, make you cleane, sayth the Prophet Esay, chapter 1. verse. 16. take avvay the euill of your vvorkes, from

before

before mine eyes, cease to doe euill. The whole Church, which is the company of the godly, shall helpe thee with their prayers, or if thy confession bee priuate, thou shalt be much comforted by the admonitions of thy faithfull friendes, or godly Minister, vnto whom thou shalt confesse thy fault. Loose not so great a benefit through thy negligence, and deferre not the health of thy soule. Suffer not so vgly & so lothsome a guest as the deuill is, long to abide in thy soule, which by right is the Temple of God. Suffer not the deuill to make any mansion in thy soule, who should not haue the least entertainment, but expell him, and thrust him forth.

And if thou doe perceiue thy selfe, to be in the iawes of this cruell Woolfe, call for the help of Christ, that most stout & valiant Shepheard, which can teare in peeces the iawes of the Woolfe, yea, of the most stoutest Lyon. 1, Sam. 21. 9. As the sword which is neuer occupyed, gathereth rust in the sheath, and is fit for nothing, so that soule which gathereth still the filth of sin, and is neuer clensed, is fitte for no vse, but onely for destruction. The seruaunts are willed to bring foorth the best robe. God

onely

onely giueth grace, and forgiuenesse of sinnes, but by the handes of his seruaunts the Ministers, it is applyed vnto sinners; who vpon theyr true repentance, in Gods name, and in his behalfe, do absolue them from their sinne. As the psalme 130. saith, With the Lord there is mercy, and vvith him there is plentious redemption, and he shall redeeme Israell frō all his sinnes. The Ministers, they bring foorth this precious robe out of the Wardrobe of Gods mercie, and of the infinite merrits of Christ his death and passion.

He put on a ring on his hand.] That is, hee gaue him power to practise all good workes. Hee restoreth vnto this penitent sinner, the garment of holines and grace, and all other good workes which hee did in the state of grace, before hee fell from thence. Ring.

He put shooes on his feete.] That is, he made the rebellious affections, of his corrupted hart and stubborne will, obedient and subiect to the rule and gouernment of his godly and sanctified soule: hee made them most swift and ready to doe good, which before were slow to all godlinesse, and most quicke to all wickednes. Shooes.

All which came not from the power of his free-will, but from the eſpeciall grace of God. That the prodigall ſonne conſidering his owne vnworthines, might the more reioyce in Gods infinite goodnes, & in his vnſpeakable mercy.

Three degrees of graces.

Marke howe this forlorne ſinner, vvas vouchſafed a three-fold grace of GOD. The firſt is, his preuenting grace. The ſecond, his helping and furthering grace. And thirdly, his perfecting grace. Of the firſt, the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, Gala. 1. 15. When it pleaſed God, which had ſeparated me from my mothers wombe, and called me by his grace.

Preuenting.

Of this grace the prodigall Sonne had triall, when his Father ſaw him a farre of, and mooued with compaſſion, ran & met him. For vnleſſe God did ſee vs, call vs, & runne to meete vs, wee could neuer come vnto him.

Helping.

Of the ſecond grace, that is of Gods helping & furthering grace, S. Paul ſpeaketh. 1. Cor. 15. 10. I laboured more abundantly thē they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which is with me. Hee had ſhooes put on his feet, and he was made ſwift to walke in the commaundements of God.

Of the third degree of grace, that is of continuance & perfection, the same Apostle speaketh. Phil.2. that God doth work in vs both the wil and the deed, to begin, to performe, & to continue to the end. Perfecting.

The first grace dooth cleane doe away our offences, of which the Apostle speaketh, Rom.3.24. that we are iustified freely by grace. The second grace dooth giue force & strength to all good works. The third grace receaueth vs into familiaritie, and especiall fauour, in that our heauenly father vouchsafeth vs, to bee pertakers of his table, when he saith, Let vs eate and be merry. When Dauid forgaue Absolon his fault, he cōmanded him not to see his face, nor once to approch into his presence, but God of his infinite mercy, and exceeding great bounty, doth not onely forgiue the sinner his sin, but also sheweth further fauour, and receiueth him into his house, & maketh him sit downe at table with him. Wherfore the Apostle, 2.Cor. 1. 3. calleth God not only the God of mercies, but also the Father of all comfort; thereby expressing the manifold goodnes and bountie of God toward sinners. For it is the onely worke of mercy, to forgiue iniuries.

But God not content onely here-with, of a Reuenger doth shew himselfe a great Comforter, not onely forgiuing sinne, but granting grace, to take heed of future follies, and how we fall into the like offences againe. As Iob saith, chap. 22. If thou returne to the Almightie, thou shalt be built vp, and thou shalt put iniquitie farre from thy tabernacle. Thou shalt lay vp gold for dust, and the gold of Ophir, as the flints of the riuers. For weakenesse thou shalt haue strength, and for ignorance & blindnes, thou shalt haue heauenly wisedome, & in steed of the wine of the pleasures of this worlde, thou shalt drinke of the water of life, & shalt neuer thirst after the pleasures, profits, and vanities of this world, but still continually thou shalt growe in dislike of these, and long for those ioyes which neuer shall haue end.

Many a one forgiues through feare, others would reuenge, yet cannot, but God with his onely beck can destroy whom he will. Yet he being so often prouoked, despised, & refused, dooth patiently forbeare vs, and louingly allure vs, and friendly receiueth vs, and most comfortably embraceth vs. Making great ioy at our repen-

tance

tance and amendment, and stedfast purpose to continue in goodnes; therefore he biddeth his seruants, to [Bring the fatte calfe and kill him. And let vs eate and be merry. For this my sonne, saith hee, was dead, and is aliue againe, and he was lost, but he is found, and they began to be merrie.] Kill the fat calfe.

This doth represent the great ioy, which Christ tooke out of the conuersion of sinners and publicanes, with whom hee did eate, and for the which matter he was reproued of the Scribes & Pharisies. Vnto whom he aunswered, that he came not to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance. Againe, he willed them to consider what this meant, I will haue mercy (saith he) and not sacrifice. Not onely the Angels in heauen, reioyce at the conuersion of a sinner, but also the whole church and God himselfe, and therefore he saith, let vs be merry. The first thought of a sinner is of his sinne, next of his owne malice, and froward disposition; heere-hence being conuerted, ariseth the hatred and detestation of sinne. This made Peter to say, Depart from me, ô Lord, for I am a sinfull man. There is not so much ioy,

when the sinner repenteth, so there is also as great ioy, when he taketh a good course, and frameth himselfe to liue well, after the obedience of Gods most holy will.

The ioy of a sinner cōuerted.

Not only his father, friends, & houshold seruants, but also the prodigall sonne himselfe reioyceth, to see so happy a change. No tong can vtter the extraordinary ioyes and comforts, which God graunteth to the soules & inward minds of them, which hauing left sinne are turned to God. If after this life, there were no glory remaining for the godly, yet the great spirituall comfort that heere they haue, should perswade the to leaue & to roote out sin. See the difference betwixt the keeping of Swine & the plenty of his fathers table. In sinne there is nothing but famine, & shame, & death, but in vertue great aboundance & gracious fauour, & life euerlasting. Sinners are deceaued in nothing more, thē in that they think there is not so great cōfort & plenty to be found in a vertuous life, as they thinke they behold in a lewd life, esteeming the pleasures of this world their only paradice, and therefore they are resolued to continue still in sin. A lewd woman vexed in cōscience for her vngodly life, would faine deuine,

but

but that she feareth pouerty and diuers other worldly helps, & for that cause endangereth her soule for euer. But let that of the prophet cōfort thee, Psal. 36. I neuer saw the righteous forsaken, nor their seed begging their bread. The birds of the heauen, they neither sow nor spin, yet God prouideth for thē; how wil not god prouide for them much rather, which truly turne vnto him. See how he prouided for this prodigal son, who as soon as he left his sinful life, found a banket prepared, & ioyfull cōpany, & pleasant musick. The children of Israel departing frō the bondage of Egipt, saw Gods miraculous deliuerance, sang & reioyced, & neuer wanted food from heauen vntill they cam into the promised land of Canaan. They which leauing the vanities of this world, make their voiage through the Desert of this life, seruing God & seeking heauenly Canaan, God granteth thē many worthy meditatiōns & heauenly cōforts, where-with they are inwardly fed, as with Manna frō heauen, hauing diuers secret incouragements, that they should not faint. The Israelites in Egipt fed vpō Onions & Garlick, but in the Desert they fared most daintily: so this prodigal son before he

came to his father fed vpon husks, but being returned, hath his part of the fat calfe.

It is worthy the noting, to see howe in the beginning of our conuersion, it pleaseth God to graunt aboundance of ioy, as he did to this prodigall sonne, and to the Israelites going out of Egipt. This God doth in great mercy, considering the great frailty of them, who newly haue returned. For they stand in neede of speciall helpe and comfort. Who although they be returned by Gods especiall appointment, sustaine many labous, and endure many tentations, as the people of Israell did in the Desert. Yet in all these labours and trialls, they are not forsaken of the Lord, but at last they haue the vpper hand, as the Israelites had of the Canaanites. Many thinke a vertuous life is painfull, and a vicious life most pleasant, but the difference is in the end. For the end of the vertuous life is ioy in another world, how troublesom so euer it hath beene in this world; but the end of a vicious life is most lamentable, whē these short ioyes are soone cut off. The beginning of our conuersion, and the end of our perfection, God doth crowne with greatest ioy. Fruite trees when they begin

to bud, haue a flourishing shew, and when they yeeld their fruite, then are they most accounted of. In some God doth magnifie his mercy, in others he rewardeth their good deedes.

When God by his secret grace, doth espouse himselfe to the soule of any man or woman, because hee receaueth the same, poore and naked, of his owne cost he maketh a bountifull feast, neither doth he order the matter after the deserts of that soule which is espoused vnto him, but according to his owne wealth and aboundance, hauing all from him selfe, & nothing from that. Therefore it is said in the Canticles, My sister is but a little one, and hath no breasts. The parents loue their children, but especially the yong ones, they carry in their armes, & tender them most. So God is most tender ouer them, that are newly conuerted vnto him, and beareth much with their infirmities, and helpeth them forward, and stayeth them as a nurse doth her children. Therefore Christ did not onely louingly and mercifully receaue the publicanes and sinners that repented, but was conuersant with them, and did eate with them. He that found his lost sheepe,

laid it on his ſhoulders with ioy; and when he cãth home he called together his friends and his neighbours, ſaying vnto them, Reioyce with me, for I haue found my ſheepe which was loſt. So the woman when ſhe had found her groate that ſhe loſt, called her friends & neighbours ſaying, Reioyce with me, for I haue found the peece which I had loſt.

The prodigall Sonne ſayde, I will riſe and goe to my Father, and ſay vnto him, Father I haue ſinned againſt heauen and before thee, and am no more woorthy to be called thy Sonne, make mee as one of thy hired ſeruants. So he aroſe and came to his Father, and when he was yet a great way off, his Father ſaw him and had compaſſion, and ranne and fell on his necke and kiſſed him. Then the Father ſaid to his ſeruaunts, Bring fourth the beſt robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his handes, and ſhooes on his feete. And bring the fatte calfe, and kill him, and let vs eate and be merry. For this my ſonne was dead, and is aliue againe, and hee was loſt, but he is found, (for the Scripture termeth them dead that are giuen vp to ſinne, and they are riſen from the dead, which

which repent and amend.) And they be-ganne to be merry at so happy a change. For I say vnto you, that ioy shall bee in heauen for one sinner that conuerteth, more then for ninety and nine iust men, which thinke they need none amendment of life.] Yea, there shall be ioy in the presence of the Angels of God, for one sinner that conuerteth.

But now let vs behold the murmuring of the Pharises, whom this elder grudging sonne doth represent: and howe Christ playeth the aduocate pleadeth for sinners, & taketh their part, which is the last thing to be spoken of, and wherein the whole parable is concluded.

Now the elder brother was in the fielde, and when hee came and drewe neere to the house, hee heard melody and dauncing. And called one of his seruaunts, and asked what those thinges meant. And he saide vnto him, Thy brother is come, and thy Father hath killed the fatted calfe, because he hath receaued him safe & sound. Then he was angry and would not goe in, therefore came his Father out and entreated him.]

In

In this last consideration, is contained a great encouragement, to them that liue well, that they may continue in well doing, and be godly still. As we reade Re. 21.11. He that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still. Behold I come shortly, and my reward is with mee, to giue vnto euery one as his worke shall be. Sonne (saith this Father) thou art euer with me, and all that I haue is thine. Also heere is contained an instruction vnto the godly, not to murmure at Gods workes, but rather to reuerence them, and to reioyce, that it hath pleased him to deale so graciously with sinners, & to call them home, that went so far astray. Whereby we are further taught, not rashly to iudge of any, but to hope the best, and in charity to pray for their amendment. Ia. 6.20. Ga. 6.1.

As we are willed to mourne with them that mourne, so also are we counsailed to reioyce in all christian sort, with them that reioyce, and not to repine and grudge at any thing that good is. Especially wee should reioyce and be glad one with another, at the conuersion of a sinner, as the Apostles reioyced at the conuersion of the

Gen-

Gentiles, Acts, 11, 18. When they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God saying. Then hath God also graunted to the Gentiles repentance vnto life. The Pharisies through the pride and high conceite of their own worthines, and disdaine of sinners, could not reioyce at the conuersion of sinners, or that any fauour should be shewed them. Our Sauiour Christ sitting at table in the house of a Pharise, and Mary Magdalen standing behind him, and wiping his feete with the haires of her head, the Pharise which bad him, thought this with himselfe. If this man were a prophet, he would surely haue knowne who and what manner of woman this is, which toucheth him, for she is a sinner. To whom Christ aunswered, by way of a parable, that many sinnes were forgiuen her, because she loued much, because she turned from her vaine loue, and turned to the Lord with all her heart, Math. 20. The maister of the vineyard, when he was to pay the labourers their hire, gaue vnto them that came in last, as much as he gaue vnto them that came in first, therefore the labourers murmured against the maister of the vineyard, saying. These last haue

wrought but one houre, & thou hast made them equall vnto vs, which haue born the burden and heate of the day. And he answered one of them saying; Friend, I doe thee no wrong, is it not lawfull for me to doe as I will with my owne. Is thine eye euill, because mine is good? Ionas when he had prophecied the destruction of Niniuie, went out of the Citty, & sate on the east side of the Citty, and there made him a Booth, and sate vnder it in the shaddow, till he might see what should be doone in the Citty. And God made a gourd to rise vp, which shadowed Ionas from the heat of the sunne, whereat he was glad. Anone after GOD caused it to perrish, whereupon Ionas wished in his heart to die. Then God saide vnto Ionas; Dost thou well to be angry for the gourd? And hee said, I doe well to be angry vnto the death. Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pitty on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neyther madest it grow, which came vp in one night, and perrished in another; and should not I spare Niniuie that great Citty? wherein are sixe score thousande persons, that cannot discerne betwixt theyr right hand and theyr left?

Should

Should man that hath neede of Gods mercy, repine when GOD sheweth mercie vnto others, especially Ionas, vvhich had so manifolde tryall of Gods mercie. VVee knowe not into what sinnes wee may fall, when as wee would be glad to cry and call for mercy, and to desire others to pray for vs. VVho was more approued of the Lord, the Leuit, or the Samaritane that helped the wounded man, that fell among theeues.

Many in these our dayes are like to those before recited, which are sorry that God is eyther bountifull, or mercifull vnto others, and doe enuie that GOD dooth good vnto sinners; vvhich in a manner seeme to sinne against the holy Ghost, because they are agreeued to beholde Gods goodnes and gracious vvorkes in others. VVho by reason of GODS mercie, growe to bee malicious, beeing heerein lyke vnto spyders, vvho out of good flowers, canne gather nothing but poyson, and in so dooing, treasure and heape vp vnto them-selues vvrath agaynst the day of vvrath, and of GODS iust indignation. They oppose them-selues agaynst Charitie, vvhich is the Ladie Enuie.

and

and Queene of all other vertues. Wherein their sinne is so much the greater; as also the wise man saith, Wisd. 2. Through enuie of the deuil came death into the world, and they that holde of his side prooue it. Through enuie of Gods glory, the Angels became deuils, through enuy of mans estate, the deuill tempted him to disobey God, and so ouerthrew him. Caine slew Abell, because his owne deedes were euill, and his brothers good. Iosephs brethren through enuy sold him, and Saul persecuted Dauid, and the Iewes crucified Christ. Ah cruell vipers, that sought his death, who came to giue them life.

If we were as holy and as righteous as euer were Dauid, Samuell, Esay, Ieremy, yet heerein wee should not murmure, to see God shew mercy to others. Moses wished himselfe to be raced out of the booke of life for the Israelites, Samuell prayed for Saul, Ieremy wished his head were a fountaine of teares, that he might weepe for his people. Christ prayeth for his persecutours, Father forgiue them they know not what they doe, and S. Stephen prayed, that the Lord would not lay that sinne to their charge. Poore publicanes and sinners that

are distressed in conscience,& faine would come, suffer them to come vnto me, for of such and to such,appertaineth the kingdome of heauen. For they are your brethren, and I am the father of them, and of you,and loue them entirely. They hauing care of their saluation, at last are turned to the Lord, whereof you also ought to reioyce,and to giue God great thanks. If we grudge and repine at Gods mercy toward others, and it proceede from enuy,our nature is most bad, if from our seuerity, wee are too extreame Iudges,little considering what we would should be done to vs, in the like case, and what may fall out vpon our selues. Let vs marke the high mind of the Pharisee, and howe he boasted of his owne righteousnes, Luk.18. I thank thee ô God, that I am not as other men, deceauers, adulterers, or euen as this publican: I fast twice in the weeke, I giue tithe of all that I possesse. The selfe same thing saith the elder brother, Loe these many yeares haue I done thee seruice, neither brake I at any time thy commaundement,and yet thou neuer gauest me a Kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this thy sonne was come,(disdainfully spoken)

ken, which hath deuoured thy goods with harlots, thou hast for his sake killed the fat calfe.] Titus. 3. 3. For wee our selues also were in times past, vnwise, disobedient, deceaued, seruing the lusts and diuers pleasures, liuing in maliciousnes & enuy, hatefull, and hating one another. But when the bountifulnes and loue of God our Sauiour toward man appeared; Not by the workes of righteousnes which wee had done: but according to his mercy he saued vs, by the washing of the new birth, & the renewing of the holy ghost. Which hee shedde on vs aboundantly through Iesus Christ our Sauiour, that fat calfe and that immaculate Lamb, which was slain for vs that our soules might feede on his deserts, and haue especiall comfort there-hence. These Pharises neuer tooke vpon them a mercifull disposition, & therfore knew not what pertained to mercy. But as the poore publican went away more iustified in gods sight, then he that boasted so much of his owne righteous deedes, so gods mercy is more plenteous, and his goodnes more abundant toward them that repent & are humbled, thē to them that stand stiffe vpon their merits & deserts. For they that

stand

ſtand, may fall, & let them that think they ſtand, take heede leaſt they fall.

If we will be accounted the children of god, we muſt brotherly forgiue thoſe faults & offences, which god himſelfe forgiueth. Many vnderſtande the Iewes, vnder the name of the elder brother, for wee knowe how with great pride & loftines, they did grudge at the calling of the Gentiles. But they which ſo expound this parable, doe not well conſider the true meaning therof, although it may ſuffer that application. Hipocrites cannot abide that gods mercy ſhould be ſo large, who were they ſuch obedient ſonnes as they boaſt theſelues, yet they ought not ſo proudly and ſo diſdainfully, to enuy and grudge at their poore brethren, who repent and turne to newnes of life.

Oftentimes the elder are ſet aſide, and the younger made more account of, ſo it pleaſeth God to debaſe the iudgements of men. Eſau the elder, yet Iacob had the bleſſing. Manaſſes the elder, yet Ephraim preferred, king Dauid had elder brethren: Adoniah was the elder, but Salomon had the crowne. Howbeit as it falleth out in the world, that the elder brethren are of chiefeſt

eſtima-

estimation, so hipocrites beare the greatest shew of holines. In outward seruices, they are obedient as Esau, in the meane time they can hardly abide, that Gods mercy should be shewed to sinners, being ready in a manner to call GOD to account, as though none were worthy of Gods fauour, but onely they themselues, who although they seeme still to be in the fathers presence, yet are not alwaies heires. For the last shall be first, and the first last. Hipocrites who may be termed the sonnes of Agar, for a time are preferred, and for a while they stand for heires, who like Ismaell vaunt themselues of their birth-right, and scorne & disdaine their younger brethren. Whose intollerable pride and seuerity, doth further appeare, in that they must be entreated of no lower a man then the father, that they would not think hardly, that mercy should be shewed to their brethren. By the example of the father, wee are to learne to be fauourable toward the repenting faults of our brethren, although God doth not request vs thereunto.

To this effect, the 14. chap. of Maister *Turnbull* vpon S. Iames is notable, vpon

these

these wordes, My brethren, be not manie Maisters, knowing that wee shall receaue the greater condemnation. For in manie things we sin all.

Which words he deuideth; first into an exhortation or admonition, that the godly and Saints of God, do not ambitiously or rigorously censure theyr brethren.

Secondly, into the reasons of that his exhortation, which are two. 1. From Gods diuine iudgement, which shall be the heauier on vs, if wee shall iudge others so sharply. 2. From the imbecilitie & frailty of our nature, which are subiect to sin, as well as other men are.

VVee sin in thoughts, in speeches, and deedes, as the examples of holier men then we are, being recited in Scriptures do declare. Three respects there are in men, wherby their rigour towards other should be abated. First, to recount what in former times themselues haue beene. Secondly, to think what here-after they may be. Thirdly, to remember what presently they are. Out of other mens falls, a foure-fold profit insueth. 1. The glory of god, his power & mercy is made manifest, in making the vessels of glory, who by theyr sins deserued

his especiall displeasure. 2. By the falls of great persons, both themselues haue cause to humble themselues before God, & not to waxe proude of any thing: and others seeing most excellent men subiect to infirmitie, are therehence to be admonished of theyr great frailties, which lye hid in them selues, and which through hipocrisie they cannot see. 3. Knowing theyr owne corruption, they may pray to God that they fall not, but that they may continue and perseuer in godlines. 4. To be more temperate towards other men, if we consider vvhere-unto we are presently subiect.

Againe, manifold (sayth he) are the occasions of our falls. 1. The originall corruption which lieth hidde in our bosoms, whereby we are ledde captiue vnto sinne. 2. The snares of sathan, which he layeth to take vs, and to intangle vs in the pitfold of iniquitie. 3. The euill examples vvhich are presented before vs, whereby vvee are drawne to all vngodlinesse euery day. 4. The lenitie of the Gouernours of discipline, vvho, (according to the rule of iustice) take not execution vpon sin, whereby others are pricked forward to like sin. 5. The fearefulnes and flattery of the Ministers

nisters of the Word, who eyther for feare, or for fauour, tell not men of their manifold offences; whereby they are occasioned sundry wayes to fall.

These are the chiefest poynts of that Sermon, touching the hard censuring of others. VVhich booke, if I might aduise the young Diuine, should not be long out of his studie, as also *Topsel* vpon Ruth.

His Father came out and intreated him.] Beholde the Fathers gentlenesse, that did not disdaine to aunswere the angry speeches of his Sonne: and to satisfie him. Seeking also what hee can to reconcile one Brother to another. Hee might haue taken order with his seruants, that if he would not come in, & sit downe with them, let him stay without: if hee woulde not take part of the fat Calfe, let him hunger; if he would not reioyce and be merrie, let him pine away vvith sorrow. Who can forbid me to order my wealth as I see cause?

But his Father vseth no such wordes toward him. Heere-hence let vs learne to giue a gentle aunswere, to them that speak sharply vnto vs. According as we read in the booke of prouerbs. chapter. 15. ver. 1.

A soft aunswere putteth away wrath, but greeuous words stir vp strife. An enemies hasty nature, may bee appeased by gentle words, and all strife and contention by this meanes may soone cease. So the Apostle S. Paule teacheth vs, not to bee quarrelsome, but to be modest, shewing al gentlenes vnto all men.

But he aunswered and said to his father. Loe, these many yeeres haue I doone thee seruice, neyther broke I at any tyme thy commaundement, and yet thou neuer gauest me a Kidde, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this thy sonne was com, which hath deuoured thy goods with harlots, thou hast for his sake killed the fat Calfe.]

Hipocrites accuse God of iniquitie, and iudge themselues iust. For when they haue performed the outward obedience of the law, they think they haue perfectly fulfilled the whole law, & that by right they ought to haue, not onely the blessings of this life, but also the ioyes of another. For say they, wee neuer broke thy commaundement. As the young rich man sayde, All these things haue I obserued from my youth. Math. 19. 20. But when they heare out of the

the gospell, that GOD doth not respect mens merrits and deserts, but dooth freely forgiue sinnes, & receiue sinners vnto mercie, of his owne good will and vndeserued fauour, they by and by iudge GOD to be most vnrighteous, which doth reiect those which haue deserued so worthy well in the sight of the world, and doth receiue notorious sinners, and knowne offenders. Esay. 58. 3. Wee haue fasted, say they, and thou hast not regarded; we haue humbled our soules, and thou knewest not. What righteousnes is this, to condemne vs that haue fulfilled the lawe, and to saue them which haue so diuersly transgressed it? This is the foolish boasting of hypocrites. Thys elder brother is worthy of reproofe in two respects: First, that he had no cause to be angry, to see his younger brother to be so well dealt withall, seeing it was no hurt or harme, or any disaduantage vnto him. Secondly, hauing no regard of the welfare of his brother, he is sad and heauy, to see him so ioyfully receiued.

This elder brother, this Pharise, this boasting iusticiary, saith not; So many yeeres thou hast bredde mee vp, thou hast taken great sorrow and care for mee; and I shall

neuer be able to make recompence and amends. But hee forgetting his dutie, is vp with his deserts: So many yeeres haue I serued thee. As the other sayd, I fast twice in the weeke, I pay tythes of all that I possesse, and so forth.

What could be spoken more arrogantly, then to say he neuer broke his commandement? Who coulde of right say so, but the onely sonne of God, who truly might say, I do those things which please my Father, Ioh. 8. All other may say, Wee haue gone astray, and are vnprofitable seruants, psal. 14. Luk. 17. If he had committed no other sinne, yet in this he broke the rule of charitie, enuying at the good estate of his brother, and taking no compassion of his former misery. Neyther dooth he say, My brother, but in contempt, Thy sonne. So great was his pride and high mind.

These Pharises would haue Christ to be conuersant with none but themselues, and these iusticiaries, would haue none to haue part in Christ, but onely themselues. But now let vs marke how tenderly and mildly Christ answereth vnto this murmuring and grudging sonne: not stirring him vp, or prouoking him to anger, but rather by

all meanes making him to know his bountifull minde toward him, & what he mindeth to doe for him, that with all thankfulnes hee might accept of his goodnesse, and be well content with his Fathers dealings.

And hee sayd vnto him, sonne thou art euer with mee, and all that I haue is thine. It was meete that we should make merrie & be glad; for this thy brother was deade, and is aliue againe, and he was lost, but he is found.

The great gentlenes of God is heerein seene, in that so graciously he beareth with the faults of murmurers, & vouchsafeth to call him sonne, although hee were a most grudging sonne. He would also winne & weane him from his fault, by making him consider the daily blessings that are powred vpon him, & the great abundance, that he is like hereafter to be partaker of. Neyther doth he reproue him sharply, but exhorteth by milde perswasions, saying;

It vvas meete that we should make merrie, and be gladde; and why art thou thus offended, seeing thou shouldst be in thys case as ioyfull as vvee. For thys thy Brother.]

Note

Note how hee saith not, My sonne, but This thy brother, to allure him to mutuall concord, loue, & good will. Whereby we also haue a warning, to shew compassion one toward another, and to reioyce at the good one of another, seeing wee are the same people & Nation, hauing one God, one Redeemer, one Baptisme. Exod. 32. When the people had offended, the Lord said vnto Moses, Goe downe, thy people haue committed a great sin. And Moses likewise vnto the Lord, O Lord, let not thy wrath breake forth against thy people, vtterly to consume them. Therefore nowe if thou pardon theyr sin, thy mercie shall appeare, but if thou wilt not, I pray thee rase me out of thy booke, which thou hast written.

He was dead, and is aliue againe.] And such is the estate of those that depart from God, that they are counted for dead, and lost, but when they returne to God, they liue againe. For repentance it is, that makes the way to Gods mercy: of which mercie we take hold by faith, but yet wee are not capable of that mercy, vntill wee displease our selues. Through sin commeth death. For death is the wages of sin. Rom. 6. In

that we are recouered from sin and death, it is Gods mercy, as the prophet Ose speaketh, chap. 13. O Israell, one hath destroied thee, but in me is thy help. Where had Ionas beene, or what had become of him, if God had not thought of him in mercy, and brought him to comfort againe. The benefits that GOD daily poureth downe vpon vs, shewe that our destruction commeth not from him, but wee our selues are the workers of our owne ouerthrow. And when we are restored, we are to reioyce of Gods mercy and goodnes, & to accuse & condemne our owne wilfulnes, froward & stubborne nature, which so rebellioуslie is set to contrary Gods commaundements, and holy will and law.

By this parable, sinners are to behold an assured trust in Gods mercy, that they may learne to repent, and to yeelde themselues to Gods calling. Also, those that stande, may learne to feare God, and not to contemne poore penitent sinners, but let them feare Gods iudgements, there-withall acknowledging Gods mercy for forgiuenes of sinnes, that euen they also may obtaine saluation through Iesus Christ. Who was therefore sent of God the Father, into this

world,

world, to saue sinners. 1. Tim. 1. 15. For God hath not sent his Son into the world, to iudge the world, but that the world by him should be saued. Ioh. 3. 17.

The Father of this prodigall sonne, had more ioy in the recouery of his sonne, then in the losse of that great wealth and substance. Vnder the example of the Father, pleading in the behalfe of his prodigall sonne, is manifestly declared howe Christ aunswereth for sinners, becommeth theyr Patron, Aduocate, and defender: that we also may learne to humble our selues, to the releefe and helpe of sinners, to be gracious, louing, and modest to all, and to be well inclined euen toward our very enemies, which continually murmur & speak ill of vs. Which thing if thou shalt frame thy selfe vnto, & doe thy endeuour to the best of thy power, thou shalt liue in peace, both with God and man, & haue the loue and good will of all, and after this life ended, thou shalt be pertaker of eternall ioy. Amen.

Soli Deo laus, et gloria, et gratia.

The Parable of the Rich *man and Lazarus.*

LVKE. 16.

There was a certaine Rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linnen, and fared well and delicatly euery day.

THis parable ſetteth foorth vnto vs, the wofull eſtate in time to come, of vnmercifull rich men in this world, for they are worthy to haue all mercie denyed them, which when they vvere requeſted there-vnto, yet ſhewed no token thereof.

In this parable are ſet downe theſe fiue conſiderations following.

Firſt, the example of a wicked worldling, very looſe & careleſſe, ſetting light by God, & deſpiſing his poore neighbour.

Secondly, the patterne of a godly man, ſubmitting himſelfe to Gods will in all his diſtreſſes, and waiting for comfort and deliuerance, according to Gods good vvill and pleaſure.

Thirdly, the ioyfull eſtate of the godly after death, being ful of vnſpeakable comfort and glory.

Fourth-

Fourthly, the lamentable estate of the wicked after death. Wisd. 5.

Lastly, the word of God, beeing deliuered by the prophets, Christ, and the Apostles, is reuerently to be heard, & dutifully to bee obeyed, which to our great good, calleth vs to repentance, & newnes of life.

The Euangelists haue not disposed all things in order, but haue set forth the effect of Christ his exhortations, so farre forth as vvas needfull, to the edification of the Church. And in this parable, our Sauiour doth shew what shall become of thē hereafter, which hauing no regard of the pore, giue themselues wholy to their pleasures, in the meane time suffering the poore to hunger and starue, while they might releeue them. Although it seeme to some a plaine parable, yet it is more likely it was a thing doone, because the name of Lazarus is put to. The effect of this parable is, to with-drawe vs from the abuse of our wealth and riches, and to perswade vs with bountifulnesse and liberalitie towarde the poore. For whom would not the lamentable end of the Rich man feare, & in time to make them learne to be mercifull to the poore.

The

The rich man is heere set downe without any mention of his name, because god taketh no care of the wicked, nor remembreth their names. We are willed to make vs friendes of our riches, not by purchasing Lands, but by giuing to the poore, that when we shall want, as the poore now doe, then they may receiue vs into euerlasting habitations. And by this example he perswadeth vs, that we doe not neglect, or forget, or disdaine to giue almes. For who would not these words terrifie, [Sonne, remember that thou in thy life time receiuedst thy pleasures, and likewise Lazarus paynes, now therefore is he comforted, & thou art tormented.]

This is a merueilous change, and a miserable alteration, to see any but the other day, to fare daintily, and to goe brauely, & after a while to be tormented with thirst, to be naked, and spoyled of all helps. In this sort shall the vnmercifull rich, suffer hunger and thirst, when as they that haue serued GOD, and liued in his feare, shall want no manner of thing that is good. By the rich man is signified not onely he that hath great wealth, but that hath wife, children, & seruaunts in aboundance. Whose

estate

estate Iob doth liuely describe, chapter 21. And these are they which banket euery day, euen as Iobs wastful children. But if you consider the estate of the poore, all things are quite contrary. And the end & theyr death doth shewe all, or rather theyr estate which shalbe after death, which maketh the godly that were miserable in this life, to be then most glistening and glorious: and the rich, which in this life liued as Kings and Emperours, and were vngodly withall, after death to be in farre worse account, then the lowest pages, & the basest vassals, and the vilest and poorest beggers on the earth: Yea, full gladly would they change, if it were possible, on this condition, that they might returne againe from death to life.

3 It is not theyr riches that bringeth them to this vnspeakable misery, but the abuse of riches, which do soone moue vs to the forgetfulnes of GOD, and our selues, & to commit many greeuous sinnes and offences, the deuill taking occasion thereby to ouerthrowe vs. For no doubt, as there haue beene godly rich men, as Abraham, Isaac, Dauid, Iehosaphat, Iob, so there are many yet in the world, and God increase

the

the number of thẽ: but for the most part they giue themselues to great wickednes, and as they increase in wealth, so they decrease in godlines.

This story teacheth vs, that there is another life after this, and that the soule is immortall, which many rich men cannot abide to heare, or at least wise could wish it were not so. But the godly that are poore, and miserable, and wretched, heere may comfort themselues, with that saying of the Apostle, 1. Cor. 15. 19. If in thys lyfe onely we haue hope, we are of all men the most miserable. And theyr hope of another life, dooth make many thinges in this life which are bitter, to seeme pleasant. Immortalitie.

If GOD be iust, he will giue glory to the good, and punishment to the badde. Rom. chap. 2. ver. 7. Heb. chap. 11. ver. 6. But thys righteousnesse is not performed in this life, and therfore is it reserued to an other. In this life, the rich and wealthy inioy the world at will, & the godlie are oppressed and cast downe, and suffer much iniurie. But to the good, this is their comfort, that all thinges fall out to the best, & they are aboundantly recompenced in another life.

Lazarus

Lazarus had comfort for all his miseries, and rest after much wearines, and eternall ioyes, for temporall greefes and sorrowes. VVee reade not in this story, that the rich man got his goods vniustly; but that hee was tormented for his hardnes, in that hee did not dispose of thē according to Gods will and commandement. As the holy Apostle saith, Charge them that are rich in this world, 1. Timo. 6. 17. that they doe good, and be rich in good works, and ready to distribute. Laying vp in store for themselues a good foundation against the time to come, that they may obtaine eternal life. And Christ also giueth vs a faire warning, Math. 6. 19. that wee lay not vp for our selues, treasures vpon earth, where the rust and moth doth corrupt. And when we make a feast, not to bidde the rich and wealthy, that might bid us againe; but to bidde the poore; for although they can make no recompence, yet our recompence shall be reserued in the life to come, and at the resurrection of the iust.

If nothing were to be looked for, or to be feared after this life, what were more miserable then Lazarus life; & what more stately & glorious, then the life of the rich

man, & how kingly were his tyranny. But therfore hath god appointed a day to iudg all matters, when as the cause of the godly shall be heard and righted, and the wicked brought downe full low, which did aduaunce themselues so high. And then the Emperour shall stand at the barre, and the King & Iudge himselfe shall hold vp their handes. Therefore this story, as it doth cōfort the godly, so it doth wonderfully terrifie the wicked. It teacheth the godly to be constant and patient, and full of hope; it also sheweth how necessary good works are, and among the rest, the works of charitie and mercy.

This Rich man was not an infidell, or Gentile, but of the stock of Abraham, neither let vs thinke that God will spare vs, for the name of Christians, if our deeds be worse then the heathens. This Rich man was not condemned for his incredulitie or vnbeleefe, but for his hardnes of hart, and vnmercifulnes toward poore Lazarus.

This story is set before our eyes, for our example, and let vs take heede, least that fall out to vs, as fel out to him. Beware that thou beest not giuen too much to the pleasures of this world, and to the vanities

Lazarus had comfort for all his miseries, and rest after much wearines, and eternall ioyes, for temporall greefes and sorrowes. VVee reade not in this story, that the rich man got his goods vniustly, but that hee was tormented for his hardnes, in that hee did not dispose of thē according to Gods will and commandement. As the holy Apostle saith, Charge them that are rich in this world, 1. Timo. 6. 17. that they doe good, and be rich in good workes, and ready to distribute. Laying vp in store for themselues a good foundation against the time to come, that they may obtaine eternall life. And Christ also giueth vs a faire warning, Math. 6. 19. that wee lay not vp for our selues, treasures vpon earth, where the rust and moth doth corrupt. And when we make a feast, not to bidde the rich and wealthy, that might bid vs againe, but to bidde the poore; for although they can make no recompence, yet our recompence shall be restored in the life to come, and at the resurrection of the iust. If nothing were to be looked for, or to be feared after this life, what were more miserable then Lazarus life; & what more stately & glorious, then the life of the rich

man,

man, & [illegible] kept, which shoulde therfore [illegible] and this his all [illegible] in the shall be heard [illegible] Let vs brought downe [illegible] called to [illegible] Christ Emperours shall stand [illegible] King & Iudge [illegible] to heauen, handes. Therefore [illegible] Rich [illegible] com- fort the godly, [illegible] ex- rise the wicked. [illegible] our be constant and [illegible] iniquitie is it also [illegible] which still are, and among [illegible] to ritie and mercie [illegible]full and very aboundant.

This Rich man was not a couetous rich Gentle [illegible] because hee is then let vs thinke that God [illegible] Other sinners al- for the name of Christ [illegible] selues, yet they are worse then the heathen. The proude man was not [illegible] the gorgious builder which [illegible] hurt the Common

This they [illegible] in prouision, and example [illegible] And many of them in [illegible] would be accounted then [illegible] and common sort, as [illegible]

of this present life. See thou doost not forget the poore, which lie at thy gate, suffring hunger & thirst. Hee might haue vsed his wealth well, & serued God, but he abused it diuers waies. First in his apparell, beeing too sumptuous, clothing himselfe in purple & fine linnen. Secondly in his fare, being too delicate, not nowe and then, but euery day. Thirdly, in applying it otherwise thẽ to the benefit of the poore. No doubt in these daies, there bee very many of his pitch & qualitie in all respects, and yet are very iocund and ioyfull, vainely promising vnto themselues euerlasting life. VVoe be vnto them, for euerlasting damnation doth stay for them. And as the world doth decline to his end, so in all bad vsages it exceeds.

Howe can wee thinke our selues to be in the nũber of Christians, when as Christ most earnestly taught humility, temperance, contempt of the world, and charitie in words and in deedes, when as now there is nothing lesse practised? But rather in steede thereof, pride, lechery, couetousnesse, and crueltie. But surely the enemie of our saluation, the enuious man hath sowed this darnell, while wee sleepe, and

while our Pastours slept, which shoulde watch ouer vs, and instruct vs: and this his cockle and darnell, hath hee sowed in the midst and thickest of our corne. Let vs heereafter learne, that wee are not called to these fore-said vanities, but to beare Christ his crosse.

If thys vve will not vouchsafe to learne, let vs feare to taste of the Rich mans torments. VVee easily slide into these extremities, through the corruption of our ovvne nature. For the roote of iniquitie is in vs, sending foorth branches, which still budde foorth blossoms, and our nature to euill, is very fruitfull and very aboundant. Gene. chap. 6. psalm. 14. A couetous rich man, is loued of no man, because hee is onely good for himselfe. Other sinners, although they hurt themselues, yet they are profitable to others. The proude man hath a great familie; the gorgious builder sets manie men a worke.

Beside, the couetous hurt the Common vveale mightily, keeping in prouision, and making a dearth. And many of them in thys theyr florishing, would be accounted of the poore people and common sort, as if they were gods.

There was a certaine Rich man.] For indeed they looke to be alone. There was, but now he is not, he is gone and vanished. psal. 37. 36. I my selfe haue seene the vngodly in great prosperity, & florishing like a greene Bay tree: and I went by, and loe hee was gone, I sought him, but his place could no where be found. And beeing in hell, this they can say, Wisd. 5. What hath pride profited vs, and the pompe of riches brought vs? All these things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that passeth by, as an arrow out of the bow, and as a shyp vppon the sea, which is swift vnder saile. Where are infinite number of welthy men, that haue liued heretofore, and is not theyr remembrance quite forgotten? They that seeke fame in earthly thinges, theyr fame hath an end, but the remembrance of the iust shall alwaies florish, as Iosias, whose remembrance is as honny in the mouth, and as musick at a banket. The memory of the wicked, God dooth roote out, as he rooted out the remembrance of Amelek from of the earth. The Rich man is not named, as the psal. 69. 29. saith, Let them be wiped out of the booke of the liuing, and not be written among the righteous.

Name.

teous. As when wee talke with a stranger, and our friend aske who it was, we say, we know him not, because we regard him not, neither doe we care for him.

Clothed in purple.] Not that all gorgious apparrell displeaseth God, or that the finenesse thereof is vtterly damnable, but because it seldome falls out, but that vvee exceede heerein. He that desireth brauery in apparell, will daily by new additions increase riot, and after awhile wil throw him selfe into all intemperance. But this Rich man in this place, is not so much condemned for his riot, as for his cruelty. Apparell.

For his rich and ouer-sumptuous apparell, he spent his riches wastfully. Not but according to theyr degree, men and vvomens apparrell may be more costly then other-some, and yet all ought to bee in a measure. But now the worlde is giuen to this excesse, that euery one wil go in these expences of apparell, farre beyond theyr bounds. Nay, in this respect, seruants, and those of the meanest calling, can scarcely be knowne from theyr maisters & betters. Euery ones minde is on great ruffes, and for want of maintenaunce, they will venture the best ioynt in theyr body, til at last

theyr great ruffes come to rough halters. Alas, if they did consider, a time of sicknes may come, when theyr great ruffes wil do them no good, a time of trouble, when thy mony may stand thee in steede, thy ruffe cannot help: a time of preferment, a time of age, and diuers are the casualties of our life, whereon our mony might farre be better bestowed.

The men and vvemen in former times, were not so arraied, but were content with that which was decent. The garments that God prepared for our first parents, vvere of Goates skinnes. Gene. 3. 21. Christ his garment was simple and plaine, without any seame. The holy vvemen in the first age of the world, euen Abrahams vvife, that great rich woman, tyred herselfe most modestly, herein obeying her husband. 1. Pet. 3. chap. For many vvemen in this do much contrary theyr husbands will, without modestie, going beyonde their husbands calling, and without care of impouerishing his estate, florish for a time, and afterward come to decay. But the modest and sober behauiour of men and vvomen in thys respect, especially of Christians, is a meane whereby other are wonne to true religion.

religion. 1.Pet. 3. 1. Heb. 11. 37. 38. Such of whom the world was vnworthy, vvandered about in Sheepskinnes. Because they placed not theyr delight in this world, but they that had rather please the world, and please themselues then God, cannot frame themselues to any modest attire.

By braue attire, the mind is reared vp in pryde, and in forgetfulnesse of GOD: and who is it among a hundred, that in this case thinke themselues to be but dust and and ashes, and that they haue no long time of continuaunce heere? Yea who is it that had any meditation of another life, that would not treade this vanity vnder foote. Before sinne man had no neede of garments, for as the Sun doth glister in light, so was man adorned with grace, and as the white Lilly, so was hee decked with innocencie. And when hee was wounded by sinne, then hee sought to clothe his nakednesse, and vvho vvoulde boast of those clothes, that haue beene lapped and wrapped about his woundes? In steede of thy costly couerings, thy pompe is spred down to the ground, and the worme is spredde vnder thee, and the vvormes couer thee, saith the prophet Esay, chap. 14. 11.

When

When the Israelites lamented their sins, they went in sack-cloth, as a mean to humble theyr mindes, Ioel. 1. 8. 13. And so did the King of Niniuie, Ionas, 3, 6. 2. Kings, 6. 30. When God refused to goe with the Israelites, they layd downe theyr braue attire. Exo. 33. 4. And no doubt as this sorrowfull attire, was a cause of humilitie in themselues, lamenting theyr sinnes, and to procure Gods fauour, so is excesse the declaration of thy manifolde sinnes, and a meanes to remoue Gods good will, and to hasten his displeasure.

Bring not any newe deuised rayment in practise, inuent not new fashions, neyther delight in them, but rather feare Gods seuere iudgement, as hee threatneth by his Prophet Zophony, chap. 1. 8. I will visite the Princes, and the Kings chyldren, and all such as are clothed with strange apparell. Principally meaning Courtiers, which did imitate the strange apparrell of other Nations, to winne theyr fauour thereby & to appeare glorious in the eyes of all other. Ezech. 23. 13. to 17. Assoone I say as she saw them, shee doted vpon them, and sent messengers vnto thē into Chaldea. They which thought thee before to be wise and

discreet,

discreet, seeing thee goe beyond thy compasse in thy attire, thereby gesse the vanity and foolishnes of thy mind. Ecclus. 19.27. 28. A man may bee knowne by his looke, and one that hath vnderstanding, may be perceiued by the marking of his countenaunce. A mans garment, and his excessiue laughter and going, declare what person hee is. So doost thou wash away that good opinion, which men haue conceaued of thee, by thy foolish words, and immodest gesture and apparrell.

1. Kin. 1. Ahazias knew Elias by the report of his apparrell, & one of Iohn Baptists comendations, is his attire. As Christ said, They that goe softly, are in Kinges Courts, & effeminate apparrell, declareth effeminate mindes. And they that florish in outward apparrell, are naked in inward vertues, and destitute of good qualities, & howe much doe such people differ from images, that are decked with rich raiment, and costly iewels, and haue nothing else to commend them.

The Apostle Saint Peter, willing men and women, to haue greater regard to inward vertues, dooth disswade from gorgious apparrell, and perswadeth vs to haue

especiall

especiall care of the hidde man of the hart, that that bee vncorrupt, ioyned vvith a meeke and quiet spirit, which before god is a thing much sette by, chap. 3. 4. And is not chast and pure conuersation before God, the rarest iewell, and the brauest attire that can be? Though iewels be Gods gifts, & the riches of the earth Gods goodnesse, yet the abuse of these is our sin. And howe much this displeaseth GOD, vvee may read, Esay chap. 3. where the prophet pronounceth a threatning, to the gorgeous apparrell and excessiue pryde of the women of Israel.

The Romaines (the richest people in the world) made a lawe, that no mans wife should haue aboue halfe an ounce of gold in theyr raiment. Thou that art a Christian, behold Christ hanging on the Crosse naked, for thy manifold offences, that by that consideration, thou maist put out of thy minde all foolishnesse, and vvorldlie brauerie. And if thys doth not moue thee, thinke what braue apparrell thou carriest with thee to thy graue, a simple sheete, and so farewell, from the sight of the vvorlde for euer: and presently doost thou turne into wormes and rottennes, and into stin-

king

king fauour, not to bee abidden aboue the earth. And this strange change commeth suddenly, it may be in the ruffe of thy follie.

And fared delicatly euery day.] Making his belly his God, as many do, whose glory is to theyr shame, who onelie minde earthly things, Phil.3. Who as they should honour GOD with great reuerence, yet make great care to prouide most precious things for the belly. Yea, many a mans table is serued with greater reuerence, then God is serued in the church. And many a ones chiefest glory, is their chiefest shame, while they reioyce in their vanitie, and in the works of iniquitie. Many liue to eate, but let vs liue to serue the Lord. Modesty and temperance, doe rather respect necessitie then curiositie; and the reasonable satis-fying of hunger, then the daintie pleasing of our appetite, which prouoketh to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Diet.

GOD hath created vs to knowe the heauenly happinesse, that knowing it, we might bee in loue there-with, and beeing in loue there-with, vvee might so earnestly desire it, that vvee might in vvished time enioy it. And why doost thou leaue these

these matters, and take all thy care for the bodie. Yf any shoulde be so gracious with a King, as to be made his chiefe Secretary, and anone after to be made the groome of his stable; were not this a great disgrace, neither coulde this Secretary take these things in good part. No more can God abide thee, when thou turnest away from prayer and fasting, and almes, and other holy exercises, to satis-fie thy pleasure. I take my selfe to be of farre better account, saith Seneca, then that I should be borne to become a bond-slaue to my body. And this commeth to passe among vs, whē we make small account of heauenly meditations and godly exercises.

O wretched man that I am, saith the Apostle Saint Paul, who shall deliuer mee from this body of sin? Ro. 7. Let vs walk honestly, as in the day, not in gluttony and drunkennesse, neither in chambering and wantonnes: but put ye on the Lord Iesus Christ, and take no thought for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts of it. Rom. 13. 13. Take heede to your selues, saith Christ, Luk. 21. 34. least at any time your harts be oppressed with surfetting and drunkennesse, and least that day come on you at vnawares.

For

For as it was in the daies of Noe, Luke, 17. 26. so shal it be in the dayes of the sonne of man; they ate, they dranke, they marri-ed wiues, and gaue in marriage, vnto the day that Noe went into the Arke, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. The nourishing of the body is not forbid, but the superfluitie thereof; building of hou-ses is not denied, but glorious and sump-tuous buildings are spoken against: gar-ments are profitable, but the brauerie of garments, and excessiue expences are to be auoyded. The meane would very well serue our turnes, and the excesse might ve-ry well be bestowed to the benefit and be-hoofe of the poore.

Haue conuenient care for thy body, but let it not be thy chiefest studie, but rather let it be thy chiefest care, how thou mayst be rid from these cares. The body is but the garment of thy soule, and who would make more account of the garment, then of the body, and of the body, rather then of the soule? Yet for the most part, the world is set vppon banketting and carow-sing, & he is not a man in these dayes, that cannot quaffe and carowse, and drinke as much as a horse. Indeede beeing like vnto

horse and mule, that haue no vnderstanding. And so is the world, that Christianitie is turned vp-side downe, into good fellowship and Epicurisme. Birds of a feather will flie together, yea and draw many into the snare, that little thought of any such matter. The Phisition will say, that the body is best nourished with one dishe of meate, and nowe it is no dinner of account, that hath not great store and varietie of dishes; but which of them comes to the poore mans share? Stand at the gate of rich mens houses, and see what store of scraps come forth; who if they did rightly consider Gods commaundement, vvould make the poore their chiefest guests.

Poets haue mightily inueighed against the ryot of their people, but if they vvere now among Christians, what would they do? what would they speak? what would they write? Surely they would hold theyr peace and wonder, and grieue with sorrow of hart. This I thinke was a great cause of the vnmercifulnes of the rich man, toward Lazarus, that he thought all prouision but little enough for himselfe. Let vs learne abstinence and sobrietie, according to the counsell of the Apostle, Ro. 8. If yee liue after

after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye mortifie the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit, yee shall liue. That shyp which hath too heauie a burden, must needes sincke, and that body which is ouer-loden with gluttonie, must needs make the soule more guiltie. God that he might shew, how small a care man should haue for meate, did first appoynt him the hearbes and the fruites of trees, to be his meate. Gen. 1. 30. to teach him abstinence and sobrietie. Paule the electe vessell of God, did diuers waies keepe vnder his body, 1. Cor. 9. 27. & wilt thou spend thy time in eating and drinking, in quaffing and gurmundizing? Daniel, that he might be more ready for heauenly consolation & comfort, fared ful barelie. Dan. 1. The deuill hath no greater weapons against vs, then our owne sinfull appetites, and if thou wilt ouercome him, take away his weapons, & keep thy body in subiection. Cruel beasts are tamed with watching, & by this maner of resisting, the deuill flyeth frō vs. For if thou shalt afflict thy body with watching, & fasting, & prayer, thou shalt tryumph ouer the deuill. Nothing is more against the deuill, then asperitie of life, and nothing maketh him more bold,

to tempt vs, and to set vpon vs, then when we giue our selues to liberty, and to pamper vp our bodies with delicats and dainties.

And fared delicatly euery day.] Sometimes to fare delicatly is no fault, and to be merry with our friends in good & honest, and ciuill sort, as is the custome of some men; else how should we passe away thys wearisome life of ours, if wee were debarred of all libertie, and all recreation. But to vse this continually, and euery day, is the fault heere spoken against. For a day or two thou maist be merry with thy friends, but in such sort that thou leaue not of thy manner of praying, heauenly meditations, & thy straite course of life. But in thys thy mirth, turne all to the best, and giue God thankes for his great aboundance, vvhich the sensuall and senceless Rich man cannot frame himselfe to doe, looking vpon the varietie of meates, how and with what manner of meate he may fill and stuffe his belly.

Yet this is worthy the noting, that God dooth graunt these sinners and rich men, health, riches & many dainties, to this end, that by these meanes, he might allure and

win

win them, to serue him with freer mindes, and to consider frō whom they haue them, that they may vse them as he hath appointed, if not heereby to leaue them without all excuse. You see the fleeting Hawke which flies astray, is not brought againe with threatning, but by shewing the baite. So God vseth the rich and wealthy which goe astray from him; hee allureth them with his manifolde blessings and benefits, that they may reioyce to come to his lure, and to obay his will. The Lord wayteth for the conuersion of sinners, that they seeing his great goodnes, and how much they are indebted, may at the last relent. But if there be some few that doe relent, there are many thousands, the more is the pitty, that are too too stubberne, abusing Gods blessings at their pleasure, as this rich man did. To such the Prophet Ezechiell giueth warning, chap. 16. by the example of Sodome. This was the sin of Sodome, pride, fulnes of bread, aboundance of idlenes, neither did they strengthen the hand of the poore and needy. Thus much of this rich mans excesse in apparrell, and riot in fare; the third is of his vnmercifulnes towarde poore Lazarus. But before we handle that

point, let vs see what manner of man this poore Lazarus was, euen an image & patterne of the godly, afflicted in this world, and in manifold distresse.

And there was a certaine begger named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores.] Lazarus is heere named, because GOD hath care of the godly, and their names are written in the booke of life, because being sustained by hope, with patience they endure such crosses and afflictions, that it pleaseth GOD to lay vpon them, for the tryall of theyr fayth, and for theyr further exaltation in the lyfe to come.

2. And heere beginneth the second principall matter, namely that vnder Lazarus, is contained the patterne of a godly man, submitting him selfe to Gods will in all his distresses, and wayting for comfort and deliuerance, according to Gods good will and pleasure.

Among worldly men, the rich men are knowne aboue the rest, and when wee talke of them, their names are perfectly remembred; but as for the pore, their names are vnknowne, or if wee doe know them, we can scarcely vouchsafe to call them by their

their names. Howbeit the Pastours and Ministers ought to haue care of them, as if they were their own children. Where we reade in the booke of Deut. That there should be no poore, we must not think it a cōmaundement, that none should beg, but that the rich shold not see the poore want, & that they should minister all things necessary for thē. And indeed if the rich men were such as they should be, there should be no begger, nor any to beg from dore to dore. For if they duly consider it, they are but stewards, & God hath put thē in trust, to dispose those riches which he hath put into their hands. Many wonder and say, Why doth God grant to the wicked rich man, such store of wealth & riches, & why doth he suffer poore Lazarus, & the godly for the most part, to be subiect to such extremities, & to endure so many inconueniences? In which question they are so entangled, that they cannot finde out any fit answere to satisfie their minds. But Gods works doe proceede in such order, that if any thing doe seeme to vs to goe out of order, wee must blame the weakenes of our owne capacity, and not the wisedome of God, which is farre beyond our reach.

Why the godly afflicted.

And let vs say with the Apostle, How vnsearchable are the iudgements of God, and his wayes past finding out. And heerein we are like vnto them, which beholde the curious work of some cunning man, wherat we wonder, but cannot conceaue how it is brought to passe.

God hath commaunded the rich to be the nurse of the poore, and nurses haue plenty of good foode, that they may nourish their children the better, which if the rich doe not, the greater shal be their iudgment and condemnation at the latter day. When as it shall be said vnto them; I was hungry and you gaue mee no meate, &c. God counteth the penury of the poore his penury, because they impute their pouerty & want vnto God, which if the rich doe not looke into, being Gods stewards, they shall aunswere it full heauily, when it shall bee saide vnto them, Goe ye cursed. To some God denieth wealth, which thing he knoweth to be more expedient for them, euen to roote out couetousnes from them, for the more we haue, the more we may; as also to make vs more carefull to serue God. For if GOD should graunt all requests, we should seeke vnto him not vp-

pon loue,but through reward. The poore are deuout, but the rich are often irreligious.

God maketh many poore, to the intent that they ſhould not make ouer great account of earthly bleſſings, and that theyr minds might be quallified,they ſee that the godly doe not alwayes enioy them, counting it ſufficient if they haue to ſerue their turnes. And ſeeing for the moſt part,euill men abound with riches, why ſhould wee ſo much deſire them. And as the wiſe phiſitian keepeth his patient very hungry, that he may be deliuered from his diſeaſe, ſo doth God keepe vnder thoſe, whom he fauoureth, with the want of things neceſſary,leaſt through aboũdance, they ſhould ſlide into many vices. The Pine trees would wither, if yerely they were not lopt, and Gods care is great heerein, while hee denieth men thoſe things which are hurtfull, leaſt they ſhould be the cauſe of their downfall. For as we are woont to cut the wings of birds, leaſt they ſhould flie away, ſo God taketh riches from many,that they ſhould not be too much exalted and fall away in pride. Some are made poore, that their patience thereby might be tried. Pouerty profitable.

The vviddowe of Sarepta, which gaue Eliah entertainment, lost nothing. 1, King. 17. The Shunamite also that entertained Elisha, 2, Kings, 4, gained an especiall fauour; and doubtlesse they that haue done good to the poore, somtime or other finde it. God appointed Lazarus to be the rich mans triall, who was found to be mercilesse, and therefore in his greatest need, did misse of mercy and fauour, when he required but one drop of water, for he vouchsafed not to giue Lazarus of the crums that fell from his table.

Which. &c. Which was laid at his gate full of sores.] This & other circumstances, are set down to make the rich mans fault without excuse. If he should say that there were many poore, & he could not satisfie all, there was but Lazarus onely. If hee should say I knewe him not, I saw him not; why he lay at his gate. Or that hee was not so sicke, but that hee might labour for his lyuing; hee was full of sores: or that hee stoode not in so great neede; he desired to bee refreshed with the crummes that fell from the rich mans table, and could not haue them. So iust shall his punishment be at the day of iudgment, that he hath no

excuse for himselfe, but must needes stand dumb and speechlesse.

Lazarus shewed no token of impatience all this while, so the godly reioyce in tribulations, knowing that patience bringeth foorth experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed. By Lazarus example let vs learne to take our crosse and affliction patiently. In short space things shall be altered. Reue.22. Behold, I come quickly, to giue euery man as his work shall be. And then shall this our short affliction, be turned into euerlasting ioy. Affliction.

And desired to bee refreshed with the crummes, that fell from the rich mans table, but no man gaue him.] And, &c.

The vvorlde most liberally graunteth all thinges necessary to the rich man, beeing most plentifully prouided, and enioying all things at his vvill: and contrariwise it suffereth poore Lazarus to haue many wantes. Hovve ignoraunt or forgetfull is the vvorlde, vvhich makes no more account of that vvhich God commaundeth, and which heereafter shall redound so greatly to theyr good, I meane to be mercifull to the poore. The rich mans vnmercifulnes.

Holy

Holy and charitable Booz, as we reade in the booke of Ruth, when hee sawe Ruth gleaning in the field, willed his seruants of set purpose to let fall some of the sheaues for her, and let them lie, that she might gather them vp, commaunding them not to rebuke her. Many things remaine of the rich mans boord, which would doe the poore good, but out of sight out of mind, although they lie at our dores. And such was the miserable couetousnes of this rich man, that although he had all things most aboundantly, yet did not he take order, the poore should haue so much as the scraps. A weake & slender prouision. And such is the misery of these daies also; but so was it not in the primatiue church, and in the Apostles time, when not onely there was care had for their foode, but for all things necessary beside. 2, Cor. 8. 2. Acts, 2, 45. 1. Kings. 18. 13. Obadiahs liberality.

This rich man was so farre from giuing the poore those things which were necessary for thē, that he neglected to giue them of his superfluities. S. Chrisostome saith, that he had rather dwell with a thousand possessed with deuils, then with one miserable and couetous wretch. They hurt

themselues alone, but the couetous man is iniurious to many. When thou doest not good to the poore, thou committest theft, for God hath giuen vnto thee plentifully, that thou mightest be liberall vnto the poore. A learned father S. Austine sheweth, that couetous men are farre more cruell, then wild beasts; for they neuer hunt for the pray, vntill they be pincht with famine, which being satisfied, they giue rest to all other creatures. As for the rich and couetous man, he is alwaies snatching at other mens goods, euery day desireth more and more, neither is he satisfied, although he abound with the plenty of all things, & so farre off is it, that he doth releeue the extreame necessity of the poore, that he spareth him not, but layeth his talents there also, tearing the flesh from the bone.

Not onely the maister, but euen the seruants also are as cruelly bent, for none of them was moued with compassion, to giue poore Lazarus any thing. Many could find in their hart to spare, but they are loth to goe to the dore, to giue it them, & many haue good meanings, but they can neuer set them selues to good deeds. Well, such as the maisters are, such lightly are the seruants, Seruants.

uants, and if the Maister be cruell, the ser-
uants also be as vnmercifull. Ecclus, 10, 2.
As the Iudge of the people is him selfe, so
are his Officers, and what manner of man
the Ruler of the Citty is, such are all they
that dwell therein. If the Maister be a di-
cer, or a whoremaister, such also are his ser-
uants, if the maister be pittifull and merci-
full, and of good behauiour, such also are
his seruants and his children, most willing
and glad to helpe the poore. Gene. 24, 12.
and 43, 23. 2, Sam. 13, 28. And the youn-
ger take example by the elder, by course
of nature.

Abraham being giuen to hospitality, his
vvife and his seruaunt were as willing to
giue entertainement; such also was Lot,
beeing brought vppe in Abrahams house.
Ioseph beeing godly, had a godly seruant,
which said to his Maisters brethren, Peace
be vnto you, feare not, your GOD and
the GOD of your Father, hath giuen
you that treasure in your sacks, I had your
money, and hee brought foorth Simeon
vnto them. Contrariwise, wicked Abso-
lon had wicked seruaunts, which killed
his Brother Ammon at theyr Maisters cō-
maundement. 2, Samuel, 13. 28.

Let Fathers and Mothers therfore teach theyr people vnder them, not onely in wordes, but in deedes and godly qualities. But how this is performed nowe a-dayes, no man can be ignorant, when as in steede of vertuous qualities, they teach them all manner of vices, bringing them vp in idlenes, and all licentious liberty. It is no meruaile therfore to see the seruants out of order, when the Maisters are without any godly behauiour, or good gouernment, who beeing by nature giuen to followe all euill wayes, will quickly prooue as bad as their Maisters. The distempered behauiour of many rich men in these dayes is such, that what to mayntayne theyr brauery, and other excessiue charges, they runne into other mens debt, and seeing they are not good to themselues, howe can they be good to the poore. Rich men giue giftes to the rich, but towarde the poore they are too sparing: too prodigall toward the worlde, and toward GOD too wretched. As the Israelites gaue their Iewels, to the making of a golden calfe, so doe the rich men to their harlots, and to the committing of outrages, they care not what they spend.

Oh

Oh howe wicked are these daies, wherein no man loues the poore, no man doth cōfort them for Gods sake, yea few or none will scarcely vouchsafe to looke vpō them. These louers of the world, and enemies of their owne soules, how many Lazarus doe they see, & will not see, turning away their eyes, being more carefull for their Horses, and Hounds, & Pages, then for the poore, whom Christ hath cōmended vnto them. Of such maner of people, the Lord complaineth by his prophet Amos, chap. 6. They put farre away the euill day, and approach to the seate of iniquity. They lie vpon beds of Iuory, & stretch themselues vpon their beds, and eate the Lambs of the flocke, and the fat Calues. They sing to the sound of the Violl, they drinke wine in boules, and annoynt them selues with the chiefe oyntments, but no man is sorry for the afflictions of Ioseph. And this rich man in his iolity, had no regard of poore Lazarus. But that the rich man and all his house should be vtterly ashamed, and left without excuse: see what followeth.

Yea, and the doggs came, and licked his sores.] When the Prophet Balaām did wickedly, God opened the mouth of his

Asse hee rode on, to giue him vnderstanding, and these doggs that had better fare to tast, licked Lazarus sores, to teach their maister mercy. O cruell people, more mercilesse then dogges, which commonly hunt the poore from the doore, yet nowe they were pittifull to condemne their maisters great vnkindnes, and to make them if they had any grace, to blush for shame. The property of dogs is to barke and bite at strangers, and to driue them away. But heere the kind nature of doggs, ouercame the hard harts of men, and they are more gentle and louing, then men that should haue shewed mercy. The rich man was cloathed in soft and costly rayment, & fed with dainties to the full, and is laide vpon his beds of downe. But the poore man pines with famine, is pincht with cold, and a meruaile it is, that hee liueth among his great wants, and as the other lay easily vpon his soft bed, so the poore man had no other lodging then the bare ground. But as they were vnlike in life, so were they far vnlike in death, as the euent of the history doth prooue. We all die, and as water we passe away. the rich and poore, the noble and base, the learned and vnlearned, all are

subiect to death, and when death commeth, that makes a newe alteration. For many that haue beene most miserable in this world, after death haue a ioyfull estate; and many that did flourish in this worlde, after death see all thinges changed quite contrary.

And it was so that the begger died, and was caried by the Angels, into Abrahams bosome.] Lazarus dieth as though hee were forsaken of God and man, and the rich man lyueth yet longer, to enioy his pleasure. Yet a little while, and surely but a little while, although in the sight of the world, his life be long.

This is the third principall consideration in this History, setting foorth the ioyfull estate of the godly after death, beeing full of vnspeakeable comfort and glory. The godly greatly desire to bee vnburdened of this miserable life, wherein they are daily in daunger to loose eternall life, for the best may fall. Philip. 1. 21. And when this life is ended, all sinnes and sorrowes haue an ende also. God calleth the sinner to repentance, that hee may enioy heauen. Doest thou not knowe that Gods bountifulnes and patience leadeth

3.

thee

thee to repentance? If thou dooest not knowe so much, thou heapest vnto thy selfe wrath, against the day of wrath. The deuill dooth greedily wayte for the death of a sinner, fearing least while he liueth, he may repent, although hee seeme neuer so desperate. But when the sinner dyeth in his sinne, the deuills reioyce, saying, Now thou art ours, and hast lost euerlasting life for euer, thou art ours and no man can deliuer thee, or take thee out of our hands. Then shall hee see heauen shutte vppe against him, and GODS displeasure to take full place, and him selfe to be in most lamentable misery, and past all hope of remedy.

VVherefore nowe bethinke thy selfe, novve craue mercy and forgiuenesse at GODS handes, novve shedde aboundance of teares, for this is the time of grace, this is the acceptable time, this is the day of saluation. And if ye haue the grace to to heare and vnderstande, and to fore-see your ovvne misery, harden not your harts from God, harden not your hearts vnto your owne destruction.

The order of the narration of the History is to bee considered, for vvhen the

Euange-

Euangelist speaketh of them being aliue; hee preferreth the rich man before Lazarus. For in this life the rich are of chiefest account, in chiefest places, in bankets and iudgement seates, in honour and dignity, who but they. But in speaking of them, being dead, Lazarus is first mentioned, for before the wicked rich, the godly poore are preferred in another life. The glory of the godly begins in their death, as the glory of the wicked doth end in their death. The misery of Lazarus is ended in his death, for hee whom no man regarded in his life, the Angels tooke him vppe after death. And who would haue thought, that this poore wretch being so despised, shold be so accepted of God, but the wayes of God doe far differ from the waies of men, neither are his thoughts as our thoughts. Esay, 55. But to see howe God doth honour the godly in their death, let vs marke what followeth.

And, &c. And was carried by the Angels into Abrahams bosome.] Whereby we vnderstand that the Angels are present at the death of the godly, to performe theyr charge appointed vnto them. Heb 1, 14. Psal. 91, 11. O happy soule which heere

was visited of none but of dogs, nowe not one Angell, but many Angels come to do it seruice. So that the deuill hath no power ouer the soules of the godly, but ouer the vessels appointed vnto wrath. A bay or bosome is a hauen & place, free from turbulent waues; the world is the maine sea, and heauen the hauen of rest. And he that in life could finde no comfort, after death was carried into Abrahams bosome, that man of great compassion and hospitalitie. Or rather, because Abraham was the Father of the faithfull, hee is there placed where Abraham is: or more neere, where Christ our head is, there shall the godly & faithfull, Christ his members be. Iohn. 14. 1. 2. And although heere is no mention made of Lazarus buriall, wee must not therefore suppose, that he was cast foorth to the foules of the ayre, or the beastes of the field, for no doubt he was laid in Christian buriall, but his buriall is not remembred, because it was not performed vvith pompe & solemnitie, as the rich mans buriall was, which was the last of all the Rich mans pride and brauery. And what good can a pompous buriall doe, to miserable soules that are damned in hell.

The rich man also died & was buried.]
4. Nowe commeth the chiefest matter to be handled, which is the fourth consideration, wherein we may behold the lamentable estate of the wicked after death. And if Angels conuey the soules of the godlie after death, what becommeth of the soules of the wicked, and by whom are they conueyed? The rich man also dyed, but the rich do not consider this, till death of force take hold of them. psalme. 49. 7. No man can deliuer his brother, nor make agreement vnto God for him. Ecclus. 41. 1. O death, howe bitter is the remembrance of thee, to a man that liueth at rest in his possessions, vnto the man that hath nothing to vexe him, and that hath prosperitie in all things. If Princes and Magistrates, & the mightie men of the worlde, did consider this, it would abate theyr pride and arrogancie, and they would learne to behaue themselues, rather like mortall men then gods. And what is more absurd, then for a man to put his hope in the things of thys world. Hast thou made a couenaunt vvith hell, that thou shalt neuer come thether, or hath God graunted thee a lease of thy life, or made thee such a promise, that thou

shalt

shalt neuer die. What profit doth gold & siluer, and gay apparrell, lands, goods, and possessions, thy wife, children, seruants, thy kinred and acquaintance bring thee, when death is ready to strike the stroke? Can they deliuer vs from death, or saue vs from hell. Baruc.3.16. Where are the princes of the heathen, and they that hoorded vp siluer and golde, wherein men trust, & made no end of theyr gathering. They are come to naught, & gon down to hel, & other are com vp in their steeds. Iob.21. psal.49.16. The rich shal take away nothing with him whē he dieth, neither shal his pomp folow him; hee shall enter into the generation of his fathers, and shall neuer see light. They leaue their soule to the deuil, their body to the wormes, and their riches to the world. I haue seene the rich, saith the psalmist, in great prosperity, & florishing like a greene bay tree, & I went by, and loe he was gone, I sought him, but his place could no where be found. Now where is their wealth and their brauery? vnhappy men, they haue deceiued thēselues. Therefore S Paul willeth Timothy, to counsel the rich men, that they trust not in vncertain riches, but in the liuing Lord. 1. Iohn 2. 15. Loue not the

world, for the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that fulfilleth the will of God, abideth for euer. It is appointed to all men to die, and after death commeth iudgement. Heb. 9. 27. And no otherwise likely it was, but that this Rich man had his doome and iudgement, before he vvas sent to hell. For after his death and buriall, was hee condemned and forsaken of God, and vtterly depriued of all ioy and comfort.

And &c. And beeing in hell in torments, hee lyft vp his eyes, and sawe Abraham a farre of, and Lazarus in his bosome.] VVhat did his pompous buriall doe him any good, as the rich men take great care for theyr glorious funeralls; but as for poore Lazarus, there was no mention made of his buriall. But better were it for rich men, to haue a rich soule to God, then after theyr worldly braueries, to be throwne down into hell. Hee went not downe to hell, to see vvhat there was done, but to feele that which was intollerable, and to abide such misery, that neuer should haue end. And why was it? he came to his goods aright, but hee did not dispose them as God commaunded. Hee was no thiefe nor Vsurer, but onely

vnmercifull, and therefore found no mercie. If he were so greeuously punished, for not vsing his owne goods well, what shall become of thieues & Vsurers, which deceaue other men of theyr goods, and doe vniustly detaine them.

Hellish torments can no more bee conceaued, then heauenly ioyes, both beeing infinite. And as in hope, wee haue some taste and feeling of heauenly ioyes, so is it sufficient to knowe these endlesse vvoes in grosse, and after a sort, though confusedly, so farre foorth, as may serue to keepe vs in Gods feare. And though we cannot enter into the depth of these matters, let vs leaue of to be curious, & meditate on those things which are most necessary. In thys example we learne, that the wicked throgh the feeling of their misery, are meruaillously vexed, and are desirous of some comfort. Yet all hope being cut of, they feele a double torment. First, the remembrance of theyr manifold and hainous sinnes, is a continuall torment vnto them. Secondly, the consideration of the ioyes of the godly, increaseth their griefe farre more, comparing their vnspeakable ioyes, with their endlesse and vnsufferable miseries.

The rich mans woes increaſed.

This rich mans ſorrowes, therfore were mightily increaſed, firſt by ſeeing Lazarus in ſo good caſe, and himſelfe in ſuch endleſſe woes. Secondly, beholding how vnrecouerable his ſtate vvas, for out of hell, there is no redemption. Thirdly how cōfortleſſe hee was; in that hee required but one drop of water to coole his tongue, and could not haue it, although he earneſtly requeſted the ſame, hauing the leaſt comfort denied him, that was vnmercifull in ſmall matters. And laſtly, in fearing the damnation of his bretheren; which were yet aliue, and were like to drinke of the ſame cup. In vaine doth he looke vpon him after death, which was vnmercifull to him in his life. He doth not behold him with the eyes of his body, but with the eyes of his mind, his vnderſtanding was now opened, which in his life time was ſhut. The Wiſe man counſelleth, that we ſhould not turne away our eyes from the poore, leaſt the Lord turne away his face from vs. And as the Mold-warpe, ſo is the rich man blind all his life, and cannot ſee himſelfe, nor God, but is altogether buſied about earthly conſiderations. And as the Moldwarpe is ſaid to open his eies at the time of death,

 ſo

so these rich men at the time of death, can say, Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities; and all is but vanitie. After death they can say, What hath pride profited vs, or the pompe of riches? Wisd. 5. It is well spoken, but it is considered and thought vpon too late.

Hee sawe Abraham a farre of, for saluation is farre from the wicked. psalm. 118. So farre of was the Rich man from Lazarus, as the grace of God from sinne, vertue from vice, heauen from hell. Hee that lay at the rich mans gate, is in great glory, & farre aboue him; and hee that in this lyfe wanted no comfort, now wanteth no misery. To this agreeth that of Salomon, pro. 14. 19. The euill shall bowe before the good, and the wicked at the gates of the righteous. Diues liued in this world in plesure, & Lazarus in labour and sorrow, but now is Lazarus exalted & hee tormented. As the Lord saith by the prophet Esay. 65. 13. Behold, my seruaunts shall eate, & ye shal be hungry, my seruants shall drink, & ye shal be thirsty, my seruants shal reioyce, and yee shall be ashamed. Behold, my seruaunts shall sing for ioy of heart, and yee shall cry for sorrovve of heart, and shall

howle for vexation of minde. Lazarus in this life begged of the rich man, but the rich man after begged of the poore man: and as the rich man heard him not, so was not he heard. As wee reade, Prou. 21. 13. He that stoppeth his eare at the crying of the poore, hee shall also cry, and not be heard. As it was a paine to the poore man, to lie before the rich mans gate, hee in penury, and the rich man serued so plentifullie; so was it a paine to the rich man, to see Lazarus in such great glory, and himselfe in such great misery, and vnspeakable torments. For as God when hee cast Adam out of Paradice, placed him not farre from thence, that hee might daily beholde from what a blessed place hee was banished, so did GOD set before the eyes of the rich man, the happy estate of Lazarus, that he should be vexed so much the more. Wisd. 5. Then shall the righteous stand in great boldnesse, before the face of such as haue tormented him. And they shall change theyr mindes, and sigh for griefe of mind, and say within themselues. This is he whō we sometimes had in derision, and in a parable of reproch. Wee fooles, thought his life madnes, and his end without honour.

How

Howe is he counted among the chyldren of God, & is portion is among the Saints. It is not sayd heere, that the rich man vvas in torment, but in torments, for manifold are the torments of hell. The vvant of Gods most comfortable presence, vvhich no doubt the damned doe desire, if not for the loue of Gods goodnes, yet for theyr owne ease and infinite refreshing. The outward torments of the body, expressed by the fire, in respect of which, our fire is but a painted fire. The worme of a gnawing and byting conscience. Most ouglie darknes, worse then the darknes of Egypt. A most beastly stinke, with infinite other torments, whereof the least is most intolderable, or more then can be suffered or deuised in this life. Euen against nature, they shall desire not to be, and wish they had neuer been borne. There shalbe no power able to deliuer them from thence, and the remembrance thereof, from time to time, shal most greeuously torment their minds. These paines endlesse and comfortlesse, shall make them die vvhich cannot die. VVherefore, considering these torments, there should be nothing so hard in this life, which God did cōmaund, but wee should

The diuersity of torments.

frame

frame our selues, most willingly to performe. Much more his most holy will and law, which is most sweet and pleasant, least wee should come into this eternall vnhappines and misery. O miserable sinners, which loue sinne more then your liues, & more then your soules; why doe ye not set before your eyes, these greeuous woes and eternall sorrowes; this weeping and wayling, and wringing of hands, and thys too late repentance; all which inconueniences and intollerable greefes, ye runne into, and all for the inioying of a little short plesure, which if we might enioy euery day, and euery howre, yet is it but short, because the time of our life is but short, and shorter far then we make reckning of. And if we can not endure to hold our finger a little while in the fire, how should not our minde be vtterly affrighted, to thinke of eternall torments. And as the Wise-man saith, Who shall dwell with euerlasting fire? Out of hell there is no redemption, as these last words doe testifie, & the estate of the damned is most vnrecouerable, as is manifest in the diuersitie of torments, aboue specified. As also appeareth in these words, Beside all this, betweene you and vs, there is

a great gulfe set, so that they which would goe from hence to you cannot, neither can they come from thence to vs. Where it is worthy the consideration, why Abraham shoulde say, That they which would goe from hence to you, cannot. No doubt the reprobate would come to the glorie of the blessed, but how can the blessed come to them? For aunswere hereof we must vnderstand, that the harts and mindes of the blessed, would passe vnto the damned to comfort them; for it is the property of the godly to haue compassion, and charity remaineth after this life. Howbeit, they are restrained by the authority of Gods great iustice, that in consideration thereof, all pitty and compassion vanisheth, and must giue place. Yea rather they shall reioyce to see Gods iustice put in force. For they were not iust and righteous, nor worthy of that eternall happines, if they shoulde not approue the iustice of the Highest. For they are appointed to sit on thrones, & to iudg the 12. tribes of Israell, & to approue the execution of iustice. And as the clowd which cōforted the Israelites, & was a great terror to the Egiptians, so is there a great gulf set between the godly & the damned.

 Then

Then hee cryed and said; Father Abraham haue mercy on mee, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, & coole my tongue. For I am tormented in this flame.]

What great increase of sorrow was this, that he should desire to haue comfort frō Lazarus, & yet could haue none. He cryed and made a great lamentation, because his paine was so exceeding great. Now he calleth him Father Abraham, whom hee would not follow in his life time; againe, he calleth him father too late, & repenteth too late. See what it is to boast of the name of a Christian, and not to shewe the practise thereof in our life & conuersation. For not euery one that can say, Lorde, Lorde, shall enter into the kingdome of heauen, but hee that dooth the will of my Father which is in heauen. Math. 7. 21. 22. Many shall say in that day, Lord, Lord. And hee shall say vnto them, I know yee not; Depart from me yee that worke iniquitie. The foolish Virgins, Math. 25. 11. could say, Lord, Lord, open to vs; But he aunswered and said, Verily I knowe you not. And they that sayd, Lord, when sawe wee thee a hungry, or naked? To them it shal

be

be sayd, Inasmuch as yee did it not to the poore for my sake, yee did it not to mee, knowing that I committed and commended the poore vnto you in my steed. The poore yee haue alwaies with you, but mee shall ye not haue alwaies. Then also shall they heare that dolefull doome, sentence, and iudgement, Depart from me yee cursed, into euerlasting fire. Math.25.41. Father Abraham haue mercy on me. He called for mercy too late, as also he was farre vnworthy of mercy, which would take no pitty and compassion of his poore neyghbour. And he shall haue iudgement without mercy, that sheweth no mercy. Math. chap. 18.

Heere-hence wee may gather two profitable instructions. The first is, to shewe mercy to our poore neighbour, if vve will looke for mercy at Gods hands. Secondly, to call for mercy and forgiuenes, and pardon of our sinnes in this life, and not to deferre it vntill the last howre, or at least wise till after death. To defer it to the last howre, is to hazzardous and venterous, when as we may sooner misse, thē to haue our request graunted; the other that is after death, is altogether vaine and vnprofitable.

table. He that would not shewe mercy to his fellowe seruant, that ought him but a hundred pence, was greeuously punished. Ecclus. 28. 2. Forgiue thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done to thee, so shall thy sinnes bee forgiuen thee also, when thou prayest. What measure thou meterst, the same shall be measured to thee. Endeuour therefore what thou canst, to be mercifull to the poore, calling thy selfe to remembe-rance, how greatly thou standest in neede of mercy from God. As for this rich mans too late repentance, hee was not so wise as Dauid, psal. 30. Heare ô Lord, and haue mercy vpon me, Lord be thou my helper: for what profit is there when I goe downe to the pitte; and out of hell there is no re-demption. And therefore earnestly and humbly hee prayeth for mercy in his lyfe time, before the eternall barres doe close him in. Neither did this rich man repent that hee had offended God, but beeing in excessiue paine, he called for release, vvhen as then none would bee granted. Follow the Wise mans counsell, Eccles. 9. 10. All that thy hand shall finde to doe, doe it with all thy power; for there is neither worke nor inuention, nor knowledge, nor vvise-dome,

dome, in the graue, whether thou goest. O Lord in death who wil remember thee? and in hell whose tale shall be heard?

So long as a great peece of timber is caried vppon the water, so long it seemeth light, but when it is cast vppon the Land, then he that before could moue it with his hand, cannot now doe it with all the force of his body: Likewise, so long as wee liue, the burden of sin seemeth light, as though wee had no burden at all, but when death Gods messenger hath cited vs to appeare, before the court of his tribunall seate, then doe our sinnes appeare in theyr collours, shewing themselues to be infinite, and the burden of them intollerable. And vvee which woulde not fore-see these eternall punishments, shall then be thrust dovvne among the damned, for euer to feele them. My sinnes, saith Dauid, are gone ouer my head, and are like a burden too heauy for me to beare. psalm. 40. My sinnes haue taken such holde vpon mee, that I am not able to looke vp: yea, they are moe in number then the haires of my head, & my hart hath failed mee. O Lord, let it be thy plesure to deliuer mee; make hast ô Lord to helpe mee.

Set the 50. psalme before thee, for a patterne to follow, and let thy hart shed forth teares aboundantly. And then shalt thou finde that comfort which Christ promiseth, Math. 11. 28. Come vnto me all yee that are weary and laden, and I vvill ease you. And howe comfortable this easing shall be, looke vppon the historie of the prodigall sonne. Luke. 15. Thys foolish rich man, would not lay downe his burden in his life time, & after death is was bound on so fast, that he could not shake it of.

But why did he speake to Abraham, & not to Lazarus? Because hee iudged him after his owne disposition, that hee would not forget to reuenge: whereas vvith the godly there is no such qualitie euen in thys life, much lesse in another. Thinking thys with himselfe; If I in my great prosperity, had no care of him, surely hee will haue as little care of me, neither will he come vnto me. Therefore he maketh his request vnto Abraham, supposing that hee knewe not what was happened. But let vs heare what his request vvas.

Send Lazarus, that hee may dip the typ of his finger in water, & coole my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.] Alas, what

what could a droppe of water comfort him, and should he not by and by againe; be in as great torment? And what was the torment of the tongue, to the vnspeakable paines of all the rest of the body? Iust are the iudgements of God, and hee recompenceth accordingly. For he that denied small matters, was enforced to craue euen the least helpe, which neuerthelesse according to his desert, was denied him.

Let no man despise the poore, for God can make the richest man poore in a moment. The sonnes of Iacob came afterward into the hands of Ioseph, whom before they hated vnto the death, contemned and despised. Thou mayest stand in need of his helpe, whom now thou dost scorne. For so it may fall out, that GOD may appoint him to doe thee good. Saul deadly persecuted Dauid, & God deliuered Saul into his hands twice; and had not the godly hart of Dauid had more pitty, the cruelty of Saul had iustly deserued death. Simei that cursed Dauid, and thought hee should neuer returne any more to raigne; was faine to cast himselfe downe, as it were at his feete, to craue mercy. Haman was enforced to doe Mardocheus great honour,

Despise no body.

nour, whom before hee could not abide to looke vpon. And this hapneth to many. VVherefore if thou beest placed in high authority, doe not exalt thy selfe too high, for he whom thou contemnest, may be in higher estate then thy selfe, and may requit thee againe.

VVhere there is mention made of the rich mans tongue, wee must vnderstand that the soule hath no tongue, nor hands, nor fingers, but this is rather to be vnderstoode in a spirituall consideration. The soules haue no parts nor members of the body, because they are spirits. Yet they are sayde to suffer in the members of the body, because in those members they haue most offended: As this rich man in his dainty fare and delicate dyet. Balthazar after his banquets and boules of vvine, lost his Kingdome and his life, 2, Maccabees, 15, 13. Nicanor blasphemed GOD, and therfore Maccabeus hand conquered him, caused his head and hands to be cutte off, and his tongue to be cutte out, and giuen to the fowles.

Tongue.

They that haue abused theyr tongues in swearing and cursing, by GODS appoyntment at the time of theyr death cannot

not ſpeake, vvhereby they might confeſſe theyr ſinnes and craue mercy, vvho as this rich man ſhall bee cruelly tormented in hell, vvhen their ſoules are parted from theyr bodies. This torment is expreſſed by Saint Iohn, in his Reuelations, 16, 10. They gnew their tongues for ſorrovve. And blaſphemed the GOD of heauen for theyr paynes, and for theyr ſores, and repented not of theyr vvorkes. Heere-hence lette vs learne to bridle our tongues, becauſe as Saint Paul ſaith, What ſoeuer thinges are written, are written for our inſtruction.

VVhy did not the rich man require the helpe of Iacob, Ioſeph, Iob, Dauid, and the lyke; becauſe the poore vvere brought foorth for the rich, that they ſeeing them might be prouoked to liberality, and that GOD might fauour them the more: and eſpecially that the poore mans prayers aſcending aboue the skies, might preuaile for them: not after death, for our prayers preuaile one for another while we liue.

Many good instructions in beholding the poore.

That wee beholding the poore might be put in minde of our great wantes, that wee might exerciſe the workes of charity:

that wee might giue God thankes that hee hath prouided for vs better; that we might learne deuotion from them. That wee might be put in minde to aske of God, as they aske of vs; that we being good to the poore, we might cut off all languishing expences, and fulfill Gods commandement, that it might be a meane to practise all vertue and godlines. Now followeth the answer of Abraham, to this rich man.

But Abraham saide, Sonne, remember that thou in thy life time, receauedst thy pleasures, & likewise Lazarus paines, now therefore is hee comforted, and thou art tormented.]

He puts him in mind of his former flourishing estate, to vexe him so much the more. For it is one of the vnhappiest thinges in our great misery, to remember that we haue been happy. Remember that thou in thy life time as if he had said; Thou hast liued to thy selfe & not to God; thou hast serued thy owne lusts and pleasures, & hast not liued in Gods obedience, thou hast had all the care for thy selfe, and not for thy neighbor. Remember, or else there should be no sting of conscience, for wee would faine forget.

God graunts the wicked many good things in this life, for special causes, to teach vs not to murmure at their estate. As God doth lay many afflictions and crosses vpon the godly, to purge them, to refine them, to try them. But after this life the one haue perpetual torments, the other most happy ioyes. Looke not thou therefore for ioy and prosperity heere on earth, and to haue thy heauen heere and in another worlde. The rich man for his stately houses, hath dark hell, for his dainties and delicates, eternall torments, for his mirth and musicke, weeping and gnashing of teeth, and pittifull wringing of hands. Contrariwise, Lazarus for his manifold afflictions and tried patience, infinite recompence. 2, Cor. 4, 17. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, causeth vnto vs a farre most excellent and an eternall waight of glorie. While we looke not on the things which are seene, but on the things which are not seene &c. Also the Lord saith by his prophet Esay, chap. 65. My seruants shall eate and you shal be a hungry, my seruants shal reioyce, and you shall be ashamed. Let vs learne to suffer afflictions with the people of God, as Moses, rather then to enioy the

pleasures of sinne for a season. They that reioyce heere shall sorrow there, psal. 126, 6. They that sowe in teares, shall reape in ioy, Mathew. 5, 4. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shal be comforted. When Iacob blessed Iosephs sonnes, hee put the youngest at the right hand. In this world the wealthy are at the right hand of glory, the poore at the left hand of shame, but in the world to come, it shal be otherwise, for God will exalt the poore and throw down the mighty. When the Egiptians lay dead vpō the Sea-shore, the Israelites sang praises vnto the Lord. When Lazarus wept, the rich man was in ioy, but after a while the rich mans ioy was turned into most lamentable teares. Let vs learne not to despise those that be poore and weake, for this is Gods worke in them, to purge their manifolde infirmities and imperfections: and in like case vvas Iob tryed, and in manie such distresses are the godly afflicted from time to time, and so shall bee vnto the worlds end. Againe, let vs not iudge the rich and vvealthy to bee happy, because they suffer no aduersity. For the end trieth all, not in this vvorld, but in another. psalm. 73.

Sonne.] This is ſpoken by way of reproach, becauſe in his life time hee did ſo much and ſo vainely boaſt, that he was Abrahams ſonne, nowe his hipocriſie and vaine boaſting is laide before his eyes, to wound his mind the more. Againe, heerewith-all wee muſt not ſo take it, that eternall deſtruction is reſerued for them alwayes, that haue had aboũdance of wealth. For riches doe not debarre or ſhut vs out of the Kingdome of God. But the meaning is, that this rich man beeing drunken with the pleaſures of this preſent lyfe, gaue himſelfe to all worldly delights, ſetting light by G O D, not beleeuing, but contemning heauenly ioyes, therefore is hee woorthily plagued for his great negligence and contempt. VVho when thou waſt created to immortality, & the law of God did lift vp thy mind to heauenly meditations, thou forgetting thy excellent eſtate, hadſt rather be like the ſwiniſh Epicures, who put all their felicity in pleaſure, therfore thou receaueſt a reward meet, cõuenient, & ſutable to thy brutiſh life. And nowe where is thy fine ſilkes and purple, where be thy perfumes, where be thy feaſtings & banketings, where is thy piping

and

and dauncing, and the variety & diuersity of thy manifolde pleasures? While thou wert aliue, no kinde of wine could please thee, being cloyed with them, so great was the deliciousnes of thy mouth; neyther wouldest thou all that while so much as giue a little water to Lazarus being thirsty, and now thou canst not obtaine so much as a pore drop of water, to refresh the scalding heate of thy tongue. Insteede of thy gallant Mannours which thou hadst then, thou hast now the darke dungeon of hell; for thy delicate pastime, euerlasting paine; for thy songs and merriment, continuall weeping and howling! And now by the iust iudgement of God, which cannot be changed, thy due place is limitted vnto thee, where thou must remaine for euer.

He is comforted, who suffered so many miseries and distresses of this life, which no man must foolishly so interpret, as to apply the same to all that haue endured miseries heere in this life, to whom it shall be so far off, that their afflictions shall doe them good, that it shall be vnto them a beginning of endlesse miseries. Howbeit, the patience of Lazarus is heere commended, because it ariseth of faith, and of the true feare of God.

God. For euery one that suffereth miseries, doth not deserue the praise of patience, but they which for the triall of theyr faith, and in a good cause obaying God, haue abidden & endured great extreamities, in hope of a better life: For thē which haue endured such a christian warfare, is reserued a crowne, and perpetuall rest and heauenly ioyes. Contrariwise, the prophane contemners of God, and the deriders & scorners of all godlines, which wallow in all fleshly pleasures, and who haue so choaked vp the light of nature, that all desire and care of godlines is quenched & vanished, for such perpetuall torments are prepared, to make a wofull and sorrowfull change, for their earthly & vaine delights. Furthermore, we must remember, that the comfort which the children of God doe enioy, consisteth heerein, that they beholding this blisful estate in meditation, mind, and contemplation, should stedfastly goe through the course of a godly life, resting themselues vpon the sure & certaine hope of enioying the same: As on the other side the wicked are miserably vexed, as it were with a sence and feeling of hellish torments, which hang ouer their heads, and

and are hard at their dores.

Then he said, I pray thee therefore Father, that thou wouldest send him to my fathers house. For I haue fiue brethren, that hee may testifie vnto them, least they also come into this place of torment.]

That Christ may apply this History to our vse the better, hee layeth downe the rich mans earnest wish and desire, to make vs the more carefull while wee liue heere. The rich man being put off from all hope that himselfe should obtaine any releefe, is desirous at leastwise to prouide som good wayes for certaine brethren of his, which hee had yet aliue, least that if they leading their liues after the same fashion, should come into the same place, whereby his greefe, paine, and woe, should be increased by their company, whereas hee was in misery and extreamity enough already. But hee dooth nowe in vaine become an humble suter which in his life time, would not vouchsafe to heare the cry of the pore, nor would releeue them with their riches, that so they might haue beene receaued into euerlasting habitations.

Still this rich mans requests were denied, to shewe that the estate of the damned

is vvithout all manner of comfort, that theyr hearts may breake and burst vvithout hope, and that the requests of the vngodly are not graunted. But vvhat, hee prayeth for his brethren, and no man else, according to the fashion of the vvicked vvorlde, which are giuen to pray onelie for theyr ovvne kindred, friendes, and acquaintaunce, caring not hovve it fareth with others, so it bee well with them and theirs. But the godly pray for the church of GOD, dispersed thorough-out the whole vvorlde, and as they are members of one body, so doe they take care one for another. 1. Corinth, 12, 14. Romaines, 12, 3. And when dooth hee pray for his brethren, in his lyfe time vvhen good may be woone, no, but after death, vvhen his prayer cannot preuaile. For while we liue our prayers are of force one for another, but not after.

His prayer for them dooth giue all of vs instruction, to exhorte one another daylie, least our hearts shoulde bee hardened from GOD, by the deceite of sinne: also to good and daylie counsell to ioyne our prayers, that GOD woulde make our counsayle to bee accepted. And

that

that they may haue of his grace, to liue a godly life, in all holy obedience, according to the will of God, for feare least it be said, Depart ye cursed into hell fire, there shall be weeping & gnashing of teeth. But this godly course, of exhorting and praying one for another, is not practised, but rather scorned and contemned of this wicked world, which how necessary it is, they shall know heereafter when they feele the smart of it.

His desire of his brethrens repentance, proceeded not from the loue of God, that by their conuersion God might be glorified, but onely that his paines might be eased, & their torments preuented; not least in their life they should not offend God, but least after death their estate should not fall out to be most damnable. Let Lazarus coole my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame; the ease of tormentes, is all the matter they ayme at, they are not greeued, that God is not serued, or many offended by their example, but these among the vngodly, are the rich mans speeches; I am tormented, and least they also should come into this place of torment.

As they, that by doctrine, and counsell,

and perswasion, and godly life, and conuersation, haue wone many to God, shall haue a singuler prerogatiue aboue many other; so also they that haue been the cause of other mens falls, sins, and offences, either in doctrine or wicked conuersation, theyr torment thereby shall be the more increased. Therefore S. Austine saith, that the paine of Arrius the Heritique, is daily encreased, because by his euill doctrine, hee led away many from the knowledge of the truth, and of their owne saluation. For as wicked people, while they liue heere, seeke only their own things, & not those things which are Iesus Christs, as also neglecting their poore brethren, not regarding theyr good or commodity; so in hell likewise they care for no more, but their owne affaires. What burnes in hell but our owne wilfull will, what destroyeth the world but selfe-will, inclined to stubbernes, and all rebellion & disobedience. And heere are they cōfuted, that think the dead haue care of the affaires of them that are liuing. For heere is no doctrine deliuered to confirme it; but that which is heere set downe, is to shew the miserable estate of the rich wicked man, and of all wicked men, in that re-

quests and desires are altogether frustrate, as also the whole scripture is against praying to the dead, and our requests must be directed to God onely, by the meanes and mediation of Iesus Christ, which is our only aduocate, and sitteth at the right hand of God the father, making intercession for vs. But they that pray to the dead, shewe what weak helps they seek, & how foolish mans deuises & inuentions be, & how far they goe astray frō the meanes of their saluation, which God hath appointed. After the rich man had made his request, let vs heare what Abrahams aunswere is.

Abraham saide vnto him. They haue Moses and the Prophets, let them heare them.] We are now come to the last con-
5. sideration in this parable, concerning the authority, necessity, and profit of Gods word. Which being deliuered by the prophets, Christ, & the Apostles, is reuerently to be heard, and dutifully to be obayed: which to our great good calleth vs vnto repētance, & newnes of life, by purposing eternal punishmēts, & most ioyful rewards.

Abraham answereth shortly, telling that God hath greater care for his brethren, thē he can haue, especially if they can frame thē

selues

selues to liue in gods obedience. For as god hath created them, so hath he appointed meanes to call thẽ to the knowledge of his wil, & to their own saluation; as the law & the prophets, & the word of god, & the cõtinual preaching of the word by godly ministers. Which means shal continue, vntill the worlds end. But as no answer wil serue a froward person, be it neuer so reasonable & so sufficient, so this answer pleaseth not this wicked rich man, but as one discontented he replies againe.

" And he said, Nay father Abraham, but if one came vnto thẽ frõ the dead, they wil amẽd their liues:] the new fangled minds of men, are to curiusly bent, lightly regarding gods word, & gaping after reuelations, hauing itching eares after nouelties. The doctrin of the law is not esteemed, the prophets are laid aside, no man is desirous to heare God speake after his appointed maner, set down in his word. Som wold fain haue the Angels com down frõ heauen, som would gladly heare the dead out of their graues, as Saul would needs be instructed of the prophet Samuel, after he was dead, vsing the help of a witch. Otherson would haue all things that they hear, cõfirmed by miracles,

and others would faine heare voyces out of the ayre. But such strange desires of men God will not satisfie, neither will hee by this meanes derogate from the authority of his word. Againe, faith doth not depend vpon miracles & wonders, but is the special gift of Gods holy spirit, which proceedeth frō the hearing of the word. And it is the proper gift of God, to draw vs vnto him, which worketh effectually by his worde. Therefore there is no hope that those meanes may profit vs, which draw vs from the obedience of Gods word. Wee must confesse that our nature is inclined to nothing more, then to vaine reuelations, and we see how eagerly they throw themselues into sathans snares, that refuse the word. From hence came Negromancie, and the blacke vnlawfull Arts, which the world doth greedily hunt after, & in a mad mood doth search to the bottome.

We must not therefore harken vnto the dead, by which meanes the deuil spreadeth his lies and illusions, neither must we look to be taught by Angels from heauen, Gal. 1,8. The wisedome of men must be layde a-side, which is altogether foolish in Gods affaires, 1. Cor. 2, 14, & 3, 18. And we must

desire to bee instructed by Moses and the prophets, that is, by Gods word onely, that we may be edified and take profit thereby, and especially that we may heerein shewe our obedience to God, who hath appointed this meanes onely to knowe his vvill. And he that will not beleeue Gods word, will not beleeue Christ, if hee should returne againe, much lesse the Angels, or them that arise from the dead.

When a voyce came downe from heauen, concerning Christ, saying. This is my beloued sonne, in whom I am wel pleased, heare him; should the disciples haue said, Nay, but an Angell from heauen, shal certifie vs better of thy will. The chiefest seruice we can shew to God, is to obey him according to his will. Should Moses, after God had prescribed him how his tabernacle should bee made, haue caused it to be made and fashioned after his owne mind? When Saule was appointed by GOD, to smite Ameleck, and to slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, both oxen & sheepe, camell and asse, hee spared Agag the King, and the better sheepe and the oxen, and the fat beasts, and the Lambes, & all that was good, & would not destroy

them. And when hee had this to say for himselfe, The chiefest of the spoyle vvas kept to offer vnto the Lord, what was the Prophets answer. Hath the Lord as great pleasure in burnt offrings and sacrifices, as when the voyce of the Lorde is obeyed? Behold, to obey is better then sacrifice, and to harken, is better then the fat of rammes. Thou hast cast away the word of the lord, & the Lord hath cast away thee, that thou shalt not be King ouer Israell.

The Lord gaue his people most often and continuall warning, to take heed they did not worship the idols of the heathen; yet they would needes doe as the heathen did, and cast behind them Gods commandement, vntill at last they were cast out, as the heathen were before them. God commaunded our first parents one thing, but they quickly departed there-from, harkning to the voyce of the tempter, and so wrought theyr owne ouerthrowe, and the destruction of their posteritie. 2. Thes. 2. 9. The working of the deuill shall be with all power and signes, and lying wonders, and in all deceiueablenes of vnrighteousnesse, among them that perish, because they receaued not the loue of the truth, that they

might

might be saued. And therefore God shall send the strong delusion, that they should beleeue lyes. That all they might be damned, which beleeued not the truth, but had pleasure in vnrighteousnes.

And whereby hath, and shall the kingdome of Antichrist more preuaile, then by delusions and false reuelations, and fayned miracles, and lying visions. From the dead to the liuing, to the word, and to the lawe, and if they speake not according to this, it is because there is no truth in them. When the Scribes and Pharises called for signes and neglected Christ his doctrine, This adulterous generation, (saith Christ) seeketh signes, but there shall no signe be giuen them, but the signe of the prophet Ionas, meaning thereby vnder a parable, his owne death and resurrection. Herod, vvhen Christ vvas brought before him, looked for a signe & a miracle, but Christ would shew none.

As the rich man would haue one from the dead, to certifie his brethren; so is the kingdome of darknesse sette on foote in thys vvorlde, by the fayned apparitions of the deade, telling the liuing vvhat they shoulde doe. VVhereof the blinde and

vnbeleeuing world, hath had more care, & giuen greater credit, then vnto the directi-on of Gods word; & by that meanes hath many a soule perrished, which otherwise might haue beene saued. But if there be a-ny godlinesse, sence, or reason in vs, let vs marke the wordes of the holy Apostle S. Paule, Gala. 1. 8. Though that wee, or an Angell from heauen, preach vnto you o-therwise, then that which wee haue prea-ched vnto you, let him be accursed. And that it might sincke more deepely into our harts and minds, he repeateth his wordes againe, least we should not remember thẽ, or least we should not regard them. As we said before, (saith he) so say I now againe, If any man preach vnto you otherwise, then that ye haue receiued, let him be ac-cursed. He addeth a reason here-vnto. For now preach I mans doctrine, or Gods, or goe I about to please men? For if I should yet please men, I were not the seruaunt of Christ.

What did the Lycaonians to Paule and Barnabas, Gods sayd they are com downe to vs in the likenes of men; therefore they would needes doe sacrifice vnto them. So soone is mans hart withdrawne from the

seruice of God, and great neede it was the Apostle should instruct them otherwise. The worlde in this great light of Gods truth, is yet deceaued, wandring in darknes, when the sunne shineth faire to direct theyr steppes. Thy Word, saith the prophet, is a Lanterne vnto my feete, and a light vnto my steps: but the foolish world flie from the light of Gods word, to mans traditions. And the gospell is yet hidde to them that perrish. 2. Cor. 4. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds, that is of the infidels, that the light of the glorious gospell of Christ, which is the Image of God, should not shine vnto them. But to thē that are yet stedfast in the profession of Gods truth; and are perswaded in the true Religion, which is grounded vpon the warrant of Gods Word, let mee speake vnto them, as the Apostle S. Iohn speaketh, 1. Epist. 4. 1. Deerely beloued, beleeue not euery spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God. For many false prophets are gone out into the world, and are euen at this day rife in the world, and so will be towards the worlds end, & principally then. Which shal be a token of the latter day. For many shal say, here is Christ

and there is Christ, this is the true religion, and that is the true religion, spreading lies, & mens traditions, beleeue them not. Yea, they shall be so forcible in theyr perswasions, that if it were possible, they should deceiue the very elect. But those harts which are established in true religion, wil alwaies make the Word of God theyr guide, and theyr warrant, come signes or wonders, Angels or spirits, or any man frō the dead, to shew them otherwise.

If one came from the dead, they would amend.] This rich man is deceiued: for Lazarus, not this that heere is spoken of, but the brother of Martha, of whom wee read, Iohn 11. being raised from the dead, yet would they not beleeue, but would haue slaine him. Nay they would not beleeue Christ to be raised from the dead, but hired the souldiours to make a contrarie tale. Iustly therefore are they reproued, which seek after miracles & after deadmens doctrines. According to that we read Deut. 18. Let none be found among you, that asketh counsell at the dead. For all that doe such things, are an abhomination to the Lord. They are heere reprooued which would haue religion taught them by miracles, for

 as

as a learned Father saith. Hee that seeketh after miracles, that he may beleeue, he him selfe is a miracle, who beleeueth not, when all the world else beleeueth. Againe, at the beginning of Christ his doctrine and true religion, it was necessary that miracles should haue beene shewed, as Christ was plentifull in them; but after his doctrine was plaine and euident, the ordinaunce of miracles is now taken away, and the warrant of Gods Word ought onely to take place. Being instructed of Gods will and Worde, by godly and faithfull Ministers, we ought with all reuerence to embrace it, and to make speciall regarde and account thereof, seeing that GOD hath ordained it a meane, for our happy conuersion and repentance, & for the working of amendment and newnesse of life in vs. For according to the rule of Gods Word, both our fayth must be directed, and our sinfull life corrected, and amended and ordered.

2. The saying of Abraham pleased not the rich man, that his brethren should hear Moses & the prophets; for the rich & mighty of this world, do seldome or neuer vouchsafe to hear the word at the mouthes of the preachers, least peraduenture thereby they

should be counted good & godly, or least they should be reproued of theyr faults, or debarred of their pleasures. They loue their beds better then the Church, & plesure and pastime is their paradice. So farre of are they from honouring God as they ought, that they can scarcely vouchsafe to giue their presence in the Church, when as many with their lips serue god, but their harts may be farre away from him.

No meruell that he remembred his fiue brethren, who were drowned in the depth of worldly busines, whose chiefest delight was to spende whole nights at cardes and dice, but could not yeeld theyr presence for an howre or two to heare Gods Word, it was irksome vnto them, and they were a-wearie thereof. As for bookes of pastime, and merry tales, they could heare them all day, and not be aweary. The foode of the soule, the heauenly Manna they loathed, desiring to satis-fie their minds in the lusts of the flesh; euen as the rebellious Israelites longed after the flesh-pots of Egipt. And such as the world was then, so is it now, if not worse, full of Atheists and Epicures. O yee foolish, when will ye vnderstand, & seeke after God, that your soules may liue?

See the importunity and rashnes of this rich man, which goeth about to teach Abraham, Nay father Abraham, &c. So we beeing reprooued by the mouth of the Preacher, begin to repine thereat, being as willing to be spoken vnto from the dead, rather then to heare the voyce of the lyuing, and that is full little or nothing at all. Saule was desirous to be instructed by Samuell, beeing dead, whose wordes beeing aliue he did not regard. Abraham seeing his wordes cannot preuaile vvith this importunate rich man, breaketh of his talke, and leaueth him vnto himselfe. For as silence is the best answere to a foole, so a discreet aunswere may satis-fie an importunate and troublesome person.

Then hee saide vnto him: If they heard not Moses and the Prophets, neyther will they be perswaded, though one rise from the dead againe.] When Christ was dead, many bodies of the Saints arose, and vvent into the holy Citty, and appeared vnto many. But were the Iewes euer awhit the better for it? nay rather the worse, and a great deale more hard harted. The Angels, although they be in high degree, and the ministers of the highest, yet are neither

ther to beleeue the Maister, then the seruaunt. And the onely way to learne well, is to giue credit to the wordes of our Maister and Teacher. And that we may cut of the rebellion of our own sinfull disposition, wee must be prepared to the hearing and reading of Gods word, and pray that God would open our eyes, and that it may bring forth fruite in vs, to the glorie of his Name, the benefit one of another, and to our owne great comfort. Which thing is mightily furthered, by often hearing the Word preached, and by daily & due meditation thereof. The reason of euery thing may not be demaunded, for the misteries of Diuinity passe our reason and capacity, As the Apostle speaketh vnto the Corinthians, 1. Cor. 3. 1. I could not speake vnto you brethren as vnto spirituall men, but as vnto carnall, euen as vnto babes in Christ. I gaue ye milk to drinke, and not meat, for ye were not yet able to beare it, neither yet now are ye able. The articles of our beliefe are the principles of true religion, which although we cannot vnderstand presently, nor sounde the depth of them at the first view, yet it is required of vs, that we should beleeue, for vnlesse we beleeue, wee shall

neuer vnderstand any thing.

The conuersion of the whole Worlde vvas brought to passe, not by wise & learned men, but by simple men and fishers, which coulde neuer bee effected by the power and strength of any great Emperour, or by the wisedome and learning of any heathen Phylosopher. For hee that doth not beleeue the Word of God, will hardly giue credite to any worldly meanes or miracles whatsoeuer. So froward is our wilfull ignorance, and so stubborne, that it will hardly or neuer yeeld it selfe to be instructed.

This historie painteth forth vnto vs, the wonderfull course of the world, & the variable estate of the sonnes of men: som rich, some beggers; som liue in all aboundance, som are pinched with great extremity, one is ioyful, & another mourneth. Yet neither are the one to be counted happy, nor the other miserable, vntil the time & day come when the secrets of all harts shall be made manifest. 1. Cor. 4. 5. It teacheth vs also to despise the vanities of this world. VVee would by our good wils be rich & mighty in the world, and for the same wee venture many a hard iorney by sea & by land:

yet if it should be put to thy choyce whether thou wouldest haue the rich mans life with eternall torments, or the poore mans life with heauenly ioyes, thou wouldest be well aduised what thou didst. For vvhat could all the pleasures, and wealth, & treasures of this rich man, comfort or help him after death? They can neither deliuer him from the power or howre of death, nor from the hand of hell; and being in hell in torments, they can afforde no manner of remedy. psal. 48. 16. Bee not thou afraide though one be made rich, or if the glory of his house be increased; for he shall carry away nothing with him, neyther shall his pompe follow him when he dieth. Hee is cast into hell, where for temporal plesures, he shal be punished with eternal torments, because hee preferred those worldly vanities, before the care of another and a better life. The poore shall not alwayes bee poore, neither shall the rich be alwayes flourishing. Looke vpon Lazarus, nowe like a King, and looke vpon the rich man, beeing farre worse then a begger. And this for the most part is the end & period of earthlie honours and wealth; and this is the vnhappy issue of fleshly pleasures and sinfull

lusts, and of the dainty sweete delicates of this world. Euerlasting life is giuē to those workes of charity, which proceede from faith, and likewise the vnmercifull, are like to be too too miserable.

Heereby we haue especiall warning, not to faint in our mindes, and to be offended with God, when we see the wicked in this world full of wealth, & hauing no punishment layd vppon them, dooing in a manner what they list; as also in seeing the godly to bee poore and miserable in this life, and subiect to diuers extremities. For God dooth order all thinges better in another life, and this world is but the place & time of tryall. The long sufferance & patience of God, doth make the punishment of the wicked more iust; and the long patience of the godly, doth make their ioyes in another life farre more comfortable. If in a Gold-smiths shoppe, thou seest drosse and coales, and such refuze, and therewithall precious vessels of gold and siluer, rings and iewels, it doth somewhat discontent thee to see so disorderly a sight: So in the Church of God, where there are many holy and godly people, you see manie wicked; such mighty men like Nemrods,

giuen

giuen to oppression, and Tyrants vvhich shed innocent bloode, which may well be compared to coales, & refuze, and drosse. Yet be not thereat offended, for if there were no Tyrants, there should be no Martyrs, and God out of great euill, knoweth according to his vnsearchable wisedome, how to bring forth much good. S. Austine saith, that the euill liue to this intent, that the good and godly might be exercised & tryed by them in this world, but in another world all things shall be amended.

Finally, this history teacheth vs to bee mercifull and good to the poore, least vve fall into the punishment of another world. And let vs auoyd the threatning which S. Iames speaketh of, chap. 5. Goe to nowe yee rich men, weepe and howle for your miseries that shall come vpon you. Luk. 6. 24. Woe be to you that are rich, for you haue receaued your consolation. Remember that thou in thy life time, receiuedst thy pleasures, and behold thy miserable estate; thou art now in torments.

Would to GOD we beholding other mens harmes, might so take heede, that considering well this rich mans woes and miseries, we might auoyde the like course

of

of life which he led, and which had ſuch a bad iſſue. And let vs ſet before our eyes, the godlines, pouerty, patience, and ſinceritie of life, that was in Lazarus, vvhoſe happy end ſhewed his bleſſed life: & let vs make him our example to follow. That when this our miſerable life ſhal be ended, wee may obtaine the happy life that is to come, and be thought worthy of the company & fellowſhip of Gods choſen, in the heauenly Ieruſalem: Vnto the which the Lord in his good time, and of his mercie vouchſafe to bring vs.

Deo ſoli gratia et gloria.

Of

Of the wounded man that fell among theeues.

Lvke. 10. 25.

Then beholde a certaine Expounder of the Law stood vp, and tempted him, saying.

THis worldly Wise-man had knowledge enough, and so no doubt hee thought of himselfe, therefore hee did not demaunde the question to learne, but to try and to tempt, as they do that take a pride in their learning. Marke how the great learned men, and those that thought themselues full wise, were Christ his heauy freends and deadly foes, & they are the first that set themselues against his doctrine. There is no people so bad & so dangerous as learned men, that haue an euill conscience, dooing more hurt in a cittie and Common-weale, then a hundred plaine men, & simple ignorants. For they infect more then a plague, the one distroying the body, the other indangering the soule. Such are those that set vp and maintaine false doctrine and idolatry, filling all the world with troubles and tumults, with seditions

seditions and treasons ; as in these dayes *Campian*, and *Hart*, and other theyr confederates, flowing from Rhemes, ioyning to their false religion, trecherous practises, allowed by Cardinall *Allen*, *Saunders*, *Moorton*, and the like, howe many true subiects harts haue they drawne from her Maiesty, from true religion, from the hope of their true saluation ; from God, and making themselues most lamentable spectacles.

In an Apothecaries shop, painted boxes, with goodly inscriptions haue poyson within them, and from many learned men, may proceed most dangerous doctrine, & manifest errour, as poysoned wine may be drunke out of a golden cup. Many learne to know, and fewe to practise, and to become good. Wicked Herod, Math.2. serched the scriptures, not that hee might be the better thereby, or edified in soule and cõscience ; but that he might know where Christ shoulde be borne, that hee might come to kill him.

Many are very painfull in the studies of the lawes, searching Chronicles and Antiquities, proposing vnto themselues promotion and gaine, as their chiefest scope, Lawyers.

and therfore much wrong is done by such manner of men, the law wrested, & many a good cause ouerthrowne. But where are those learned Lawyers, that with a good conscience vndertake other mens causes; if they be good, they stand for him, & dispatch him without demurrs, and long delayes: if they be wrongfull, they will not once meddle with them, giuing the partie counsell to surcease, and to liue charitably, as a mutuall member of the same body, & as a good Christian and louing subiect, vnder a milde and gracious Prince. God forbid but that there should be store of them, and I doubt not but that there bee manie good men among them, of a good conscience, and worthy to dwell in a Christian common-weale, but I must needes say they are hard to be found; and a man shal a great deale sooner light vppon the quite contrary, so great a number there is of that profession, & I had almost said of that disposition. In all knowledge, the groundworke and foundation ought to be a holy life & godly cōuersation, the glory of god, & the benefit of his church and commonweale. This knowledge is rectified knowledge, the other is wrested, greatly abusing

ſo excellent a gift, and ſo worthy an ornament. And what grace is it to ſee a precious ring in a ſwines ſnout. Godly & vertuous, is better then wiſe & learned, without the which, wiſedome and learning is like a ſword in a mad bodies hand, who careth not whō he ſtrike, yea though he ſlay himſelfe. A learned man without vertue, wiſedom and gouernment, ouerthroweth himſelfe, & many more, by his euill example, & falſe doctrine. Firſt learne to knowe God rightly & truly, and then thy learning ſhal ſtand thee in ſteed. pſal. 119. Firſt the prophet Dauid praieth that the Lord vvould teach him the way of his ſtatuts, & thē that he would giue him vnderſtanding. Let lerning be built vpon the foundation of vertue. Put a precious garment vpon a dead body, and it warmeth not, becauſe there wanteth naturall heate in the body, which giueth life and moouing. So if the fire of Gods loue, doth not burn in thy hart, all other external matters, be they neuer ſo glorious in the ſight of the world, as authoritie, learning, knowledge, eloquence, wiſedom, ſhall doe thee but little good.

This Lawyer, vnder the ſhewe to be inſtructed, commeth to tempt Chriſt: the

deuill vnder the ſhew to aduance our firſt Parents,vndermineth them : ſeeking to relieue Chriſt in the Deſert, went about to make him offende God, and to obey him. Math. 4. 3. The Euangeliſt calleth the deuill by the name of a Tempter, becauſe it is his chiefeſt worke. And in diuers places of the goſpell, we ſhall read, that many asked queſtions of Chriſt, or rather vvere ſent from his enemies, to intangle him in his talke. To whom he ſometimes wel anſwered. Why tempt ye me ye hypocrites. As in the cauſe of giuing tribute vnto Cæſar: for when they ſhewed him a peece of ſiluer, hee asked whoſe Image and ſuperſcription it was. & they ſaid vnto him Cæſars. Giue therefore (ſaith he) vnto Cæſar, the things that are Cæſars, and to GOD thoſe things that are Gods.

Tentation.

Many aske queſtions, not becauſe they are ignorant, but becauſe they woulde intrap. Achab asked of Micheas the Prophet, 1. Kin. 22. whether he ſhould goe to battell? not that he would know the truth, but onely to ſatiſ-fie his minde. So many aske needleſſe queſtions,not to be inſtructed, but to ſhew theyr vnprofitable curioſitie. But let vs heare what his queſtion is.

Maiſter,

Maiſter, what ſhall I do to inherite eternall life.] Hearing Christ ſpeake of bleſſednes, he enquireth the meanes that leade there-vnto, beeing not ignorant thereof, as appeareth by his anſwere, Thou ſhalt loue the Lord thy God, &c. But temptingly he ſpake it; Beſides, hee calleth him Maiſter, that vnder the ſhew of good wil he might the ſooner deceiue him: as the Scorpion hath a flattering countenaunce, but ſtingeth with the taile. Vnder fine coucht words mallice doth not alwaies appeare. God in his law cōmaunded, we ſhould not weare a garment of linſie wolſie, as they do which haue one thing in their mouth, & another in their hart. The world is too full of ſuch people, which can ſpeake well of thee to thy face, but behind thy back ſell thee, and ſtil making thee beleeue they are thy eſpeciall friends. They haue a policie to ſpeak vvell of others, whom they hate; to make thee do the like, that they may intrap thee, and bring thee into trouble, by ſom words that may fall from thee vnawares, vvhich ſhalbe made farre worſe. Woe to the double hart, & to the lyps that ſpeake vvicked things, and to the ſinner that goeth two manner of waies. Ecclus. 5.15. & 6.13. Maiſter. &c.

He might also call him Maister in mockery, as in the court of Pontius Pilate, they clapt a crowne of thornes vpon his head, put a reed in his hands, & bowed the knee disdainfully, and sang, Haile King of the Iewes, and all to deride him. Also in the house of Caiaphas, making a iest of his propheticall function, they hid his eyes, & strooke him on the face, saying: Prophecie who it was that smote thee. And as in his passion and prophecy, they scorned him, so now in his doctrine, they call him maister, but in the way of mockage.

He is desirous to know howe to obtaine euerlasting life, because it is the marke that euery one shooteth at, though there be few that vse the means. This life although it seeme neuer so long, yet is it but of short cōtinuance, in respect of the time to come: for he that shall recount with himselfe the time past, it seemeth vnto him but as yesterday, or rather but as a moment. So Iacob at his first comming into Egypt, when Pharao demaunded of him how olde hee was, aunswered: The dayes of my pilgrimage, are a hundred and thirtie yeeres: fewe & euill are the dayes of my life. Few, because they suddainly vanish, and euill,

because

because of the manifold miseries, & vvearisome labours that fall out continually in our life.

VVherefore, as the fowles desire to flie, the fishes to swimme, and creeping things to craule vpon the earth, neither is nature deceaued in these operations: so doe men naturally desire euerlasting felicitie, the which the minde dooth alwayes long after, and cannot be satis-fied, and neuer resteth, vntil it hath obtained it; which happinesse cannot bee accomplished in thys life, but in that which is to come. So that the soule desireth GOD most inwardly; for onely in his presence is life, and at his right hand are ioyes for euer-more.

Thys Doctour of the Lawe, although hee be vvoorthy of reproofe, because hee tempted our Sauiour Christ, yet heerein hee is vvorthy to be commended, because he dooth not put foorth vnprofitable and vaine questions: but is rather desirous to know & vnderstand, the way that leadeth to euerlasting lyfe. VVould GOD all our speeches, conferences, and meetings, were to this end, that we might know how to bee saued. Yee shall see many mens mindes runne vpon needlesse curiosities,

Curiosities & needlesse questions to be auoyded.

as

as to knowe whether Salomon was saued? and where hell is? and what God did before he made the world? But who is it that lookes into his owne cause, as one desirous of his comfortable estate in another lyfe. Theyr thoughts go far astray other waies, as how to get riches & hoord vp treasure, to hunt after honour, and to compasse the fauour of great men, and to satis-fie theyr lusts and pleasures. Few there be that aske counsell howe they should be saued. And this falleth out no otherwise, but that in a manner all of vs, spende all our care & labours, on the vaine & transitory things of this life, which bring with them great fear, carke and care, altogether forgetting the happy, and holy, and heauenly Cittie Ierusalem, vnto the enioying whereof they were borne. Assuredly, if we should sette before our eyes that blessed estate, vnto the which we draw daily neerer & neerer, our cares, and thoughts, and speeches, vvould be farre otherwise then they are.

This Lawyer is also to bee commended, in that hee asketh the question, vvhat hee should doe. For the kingdome of heauen pertaineth not to idle and slothfull people: and therefore to our faith, we must ioyne good

Good works

good workes, abstayning from euill, and practising that which is good; vsing the exercises of prayer, fasting, & almes deeds, offring the sweet incense of pitty, mercie, and compassion, with all louely and charitable affections. And therefore we read in the gospell of S. Mathew, Come yee blessed, inherit the kingdome of heauen, prepared for you. &c. And straight-way thys clause is put in; I was a hungry, and yee gaue me meat, &c. Eternall predestination, as touching the beginning, is farre beyond our power, but for the meanes that tend to the consumation thereof, GOD hath ordained, that wee shoulde walke in good works. Therefore the Apostle Saint Peter. 1. Epist. 1. doth counsell vs, to make our calling & election sure by good works. Our Sauiour saith, If thou wilt enter into life, keepe the commaundements. For the hearers of the law are not iust before God, but the doers of the shall be iustified. The Apostle S. Iames willeth vs to bee dooers of the word, and not hearers onely, deceauing our selues. Therefore the psal. sayth, that the righteous, are mindfull of Gods commandements to performe them. The Housholder that hired labourers into his

vine-

vineyard, gaue vnto euery one a penny, he hyred labourers, not loyterers, painefull dooers, not vaine boasters. Christ saith in the gospell of Saint Iohn, Euery branch that beareth not fruite, hee taketh away: by taking away, hee meaneth casting into the fire, that it may burne, because it bringeth not foorth fruite. And the Prophet Esay, chapter 1. vvilleth the people of his tyme, to doe well. He sayth not, Learne to say well, though that be good, but learne to doe well, which is harder; and also far more necessary.

Infinite are the places of Scripture to this effect, all which conclude, howe that God doth farre more accept godly dooers, then idle talkers. To the substance of water, is added moysture & cold, it hath also these qualities, to be cleere, and very fluent, all which if they vvant, yet the substance of water remaineth. In a well ordered Common-weale, the substance thereof is the peace and quietnes of the Cittizens, the necessary helps, are the mechanicall Sciences and trades. So in the spirituall life of the soule, is faith, hope, charity; the outward & necessary furniture thereof, is the Sacraments, spirituall sacrifices, of prayer,

praise,

prayse, thanks-giuing, almes deedes, and all other godly and holy practises. For in these, thou must be fruitfull, if thou vvilt shew vnto the world, that thou hast faith, hope and charitie. How shal it be known, that thou hast charity, when thou hast no almes deedes? how shall it be known, that thou hast hope of another life, when as all thy ioy is setled in this world. All the glory of the Kings daughter, saith the Psalmist, is from within, hauing within fayth, hope, and charity, and beeing outwardly adorned with godly works. Heereby the soule becommeth glorious, but not so glorious, as it shalbe in the world to come. To these are required patience, constancie in persecution, chastity, perseuerance, & many other vertues also, which nowe I cannot recite. But how can they say, that they haue a true fayth, whose life is most vngodly & vncleane, being ouerloden with manifold iniquities.

He asketh what he shal do, to inherit and possesse eternal life, for this life is but a tenement at wil. The heauenly inheritance is without chang, & that possessiō is without displacing, or any alteration, & how excellent is the estate of man, that is born to inioy and

and possesse heauen. Which in this life he cannot attaine, till death hath giuen the stroake, & made a happy passage for him. Yet in this thy life, by thy lewdnes & wickednes, thou mayst dispossesse thy selfe of that heauenly inheritance. And in that it is called an inheritance, the bountifulnes and mercie of God, doth wonderfully shine & shew it selfe; for they that are heires, come not vnto their inheritance by desert. But now let vs heare what Christ his aunswere was.

And he sayd vnto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?] Certaine it is that the law doth set down a rule, how to frame our liues, and to obtaine euerlasting life; yet can it doe nothing els but cōdemne vs: and therefore it is called the ministration of death and condemnation. 2. Cor. 3. 7. Yea, it increaseth the gilt and waight of our sinne, and maketh it to appeare more manifestly. Rom. 7. 13. All vvhich comes not to passe through the fault of the law, beeing holy, iust, & good, but because our corupt nature is so badde, that it is more ready to breake, then to keepe the lawe. Rom. 8. 3. Therefore, although no man be iustified by the Lawe,

Law.

yet

yet the law dooth containe perfect righteousnes, neither doth it promise euerlasting life in vaine, if wee were able perfectly to fulfill it. Neither ought this doctrine to seeme strange vnto vs, that God doth first require the righteousnes of works, & then offer euerlasting life without the desert of works. Because it is most necessary that we should first know our miserable estate, not onely in transgressing the Law, but also in deseruing the curse and punishment appoynted there-vnto, that so we may more earnestly and more humbly, seek the mercie of God, in the death and passion of Iesus Christ.

Our owne righteousnes cannot obtaine euerlasting life, therefore it must be the free mercy of God that must do it. Christ hauing regarde to the Lawyers question, aunswered him aright. For hee did not inquire howe hee might obtaine euerlasting saluation, but by what workes hee might accomplish the same, saying: What shall I doe to inherit euerlasting life. The Lawe doth shew how we are iustified by works, and yet no man is iustified by workes, because we cannot performe it. In the meane time Christ doth preuent their slaūderous offence,

offence, vvho sought to intrap him, as though he did peruert and ouerthrow the law.

A maruell it is that thou, saith Christ vnto him, which art a Doctor of the lawe, art ignorant of this point, who should teach others. Would God many that are Christians, and of great yeeres, did not stand in neede to be instructed in the doctrine of Christianitie, or rather in the principles of religion. Who make great boast of theyr perfection, & yet being asked, are not able to render an account of their faith. And yet this is a further inconuenience, that although they are so ignorant, yet they wold be loth so to be accounted, and also vnwilling to learne. Set shame aside, for this is no shame to learne to bee instructed. A craftsman is of no reckning that is vnskilfull in his trade, and hee is vnwoorthie the the name of a Christian, that is such an infant in Christian religion. And as foolish pitty dooth marre a Cittie, so vvorldlie shame in matters of religion, dooth ouerthrow pietie.

Christ sends this Lawyer to the Law, in the knowledge whereof he did so aduance himselfe: first, that he should be satisfied

by his own knowledge: and secondly, that he should make it manifest, that in the law and word of GOD, is shewed the way of saluation, which teacheth what we should beleeue, doe, follow, feare, and auoyd. For the whole Scripture, as saith Saint Paul. 2. Tim. 3. 16. is giuen by inspiration of God, and is profitable to teach, to improoue, to correct, and to instruct in righteousnesse. That the man of God may bee absolute, beeing made perfect vnto all good works. Therfore Christ cōmaundeth vs to search the Scriptures. Iohn. 5. 39.

Christ sendeth the Lawyer to the Law, and the searching of the word: hee sendes him not into the pallaces of Princes, where it seemeth is the most happy life, but indeed the soule doth there gather infection, which dooth rather tende to the destruction then the saluation thereof. For what is there to be learned, but the desire of honour and promotion, enuy, strife, & factions; there shall yee see pride and brauerie, and boasting of valour, daintie banketting, and gorgeous attire, all which are the deuils temptations, to lead vs vnto hell. In the houses of noble men, dicing frō morning to night, and outragious swearing.

He

Hee sendeth him not into the house of Merchants, that he may learne lies & false othes, how he may deceiue his neighbours. Take counsell from Gods lawe, not from the world, learne to gouerne thy selfe after Gods commaundements, and not after the fashions of this wicked world, which is altogether an enemy vnto God. And the beginning & cause of our destruction ariseth here-hence, that in all our affaires wee rather take counsell of the worlde then of God. If thou hast receiued an iniurie, the worlde biddeth thee seeke reuenge, that thou shouldest doe well to thy friends, & hate thine enemies: yea spill the deerest blood, if it be in thy power. But the royall law of God, speaketh of peace and loue, willing vs to loue our enemies, and to doe good to those that hate vs, and to pray for them that persecute and hurt vs.

If the tentation of the flesh doe trouble thee, the world would haue thee to satisfie thy lust, to follow thy pleasures, to offend God, to be vncleane and beastly. But God saith, heereby thou loosest thy honour, thy soule, thy conscience, the ioyes of heauen, and that blessednes which neuer shal haue end; thou loosest thy selfe, thou loosest

God,

with-draw thy loue. But ſeeing there is no howre, wherein GOD doth not bleſſe vs with his benefits, wee alwaies owe all dutifull affection vnto him. VVho planteth a vinyard, and eateth not of the fruite thereof? and to whom is the fruite due, but to him that planted the viniard? Who would not ſhew loue to him that doth him good? The brute beaſts are moſt louing to theyr benefactors, the fierce Lyon is as meek & mild as a lambe, to him that feedeth him. How doth the dogge fawne vpon his maſter, yea and mourne for him, & fight for him, committing himſelfe to danger and hazard, to doe his Maiſter good. Onelie vngratefull man, doth not know his Creator, which doth ſuſtaine and nouriſh him, and ſeeketh by all meanes how to befriend him. Eſay. 1. Here-hence it is that the prophet exclaimeth, The oxe knoweth his owner, and the aſſe his maiſters cryb, but Iſraell hath not knowne, my people hath not vnderſtood. O the ſenceleſſe brutiſhnes of man, who in his duty may bee inſtructed of the brute beaſts.

Thou loueſt thy grounds, thy cattell, thy poſſeſſions, because they are thine, & why dooſt thou not loue GOD, who is thine,

who is more thine, then thou thy selfe art thy owne. Happy is the people, (saith the prophet Dauid) who haue the Lorde for theyr God. Doost thou iudge him vnworthy of thy loue? it seemeth so, because thou makest so little account of him. Will not God be prouoked for this contempt, and will hee not be reuenged of such carelesse people. Doost thou not cōsider how greatly thou doost offend, and how great a mischiefe thou doost heape vpon thyne owne head. If thou doost loose any of thy cattell or goods, thou takest great griefe, but when thou doost offend God, thou dost lightly passe ouer the matter, as scarce worthy of any consideration. God is content with thee, as thou with thine inheritance, yet art not thou contented vvith god, seeking earthly thinges, and leauing him.

Hetherto you haue seene why God is to be loued; namely, because he is thy Creator, thy Lord and thy Redeemer, because he is thy god, dayly pouring forth his benefits vpon thee. Nowe let vs see in what manner, and after what sort hee is to be loued. Thou shalt loue the Lord thy God, vvith all thy hart, and vvith all thy soule.

In what manner he is to be loued.

God will not haue thy hart deuided, partly to him, and partly to the world, partlie to him, and partly to thy lusts, but hee requireth thy whole hart.

Two harlots came before Salomon, to pleade for a chylde, whose right it should be, and the one of them said, neither to me nor to thee, let the child be giuen, but let it be deuided. But wise Salomon, he gaue the childe to the right mother vnhurt, neither would he haue the child deuided. Heerein thou hadst rather be cōpared to the impudent harlot, who desirest to giue the one part of thy hart to God, the other to the world. Many desire to be the seruaunts of god, and to continue in his fauour, & are loth to offend the world, desiring heauenly things, & with as great desire imbracing earthly things. Against these S. Iames speaketh. Ye adulterers & adulteresses, know ye not that the loue of the world is the enmity of god. Whosoeuer therfore maketh himselfe a friend of the world, maketh him selfe the enemy of god. They which offer not all to God, offer nothing, for god doth not accept it. Theyr hart is deuided, sayth the prophet Hosea, chap. 10. 2. Now shal they be found faultie.

The deuision of the hart, is the death of the soule; for as the body beeing deuided cannot liue, so neither can the hart if it bee deuided. How long, saith the prophet Eliah, doe yee halt betweene two opinions? If riches increase, saith Dauid, set not thy hart vpon thē. If God possesse that roome, why should wee giue place to any other? God is a iealous God, who as the husband would haue his wife not to set affection on any but vppon him alone, so God requireth thy whole hart. If he see our harts and mindes too much set, either on wife, chyldren or goods, hee taketh them away, that we should not be forgetfull of him. But if we will needes continue in that mind, hee giueth vs ouer to our distempered humor. I will take away my zeale from them, saith the Lorde by his prophet Ezechiell; loue what thou wilt, fulfill thy desire.

The Prophet Esay, when hee sawe the people of his time so vnbrideled, & so doted vpon the loue of the world, wondred howe God could so patently beare it, and being so iealous, hee asketh the question. Where is thy zeale whereof thou speakest, I will put my zeale in them, and now doe I see euery soule play an adulterous part.

God

God therefore, seeing hee is most iealous, saith, prou. 23. 26. My sonne, giue me thy hart, yeelding no part thereof to any other, but loue him with all thy hart, with all thy soule, & with all thy vnderstanding. Concerning which matter, read maister *Smiths* sermon, intituled, The Christian sacrifice, most excellently penned.

This commaundement seemeth vnpossible, that we should loue the Lord with al our hart; so that there be no regard, left to any thing else. VVhich is especially to be vnderstood, in matters of weight, & great necessity, as in the cause of religion, in time of persecution, and in the tryall of thy honestie, when thou art tempted as Ioseph, and Susanna, and in auoyding any sinne what-soeuer. Setting God alwaies before thy eyes, and treading vnder foote, vvhatsoeuer the world, or the deuill, or thy flesh shall moue thee vnto, beeing either most delightfull & pleasant, or profitable to the outward man. And such a one is truly said to loue God, with all his hart, and with all his soule. In the meane time, while there is no occasion of sinne offred, wee may loue our parents, wife, and chyldren, & friends, on this condition, that our soule haue al-

waies a watchfull care, not to sinne against god at any time, for them or for our selues, or for any cōsideration in the world what-soeuer. Holy Ioseph, that patterne of humilitie, loued god aboue all, who being inuited by his Mistresse to commit adultery, gaue this wise and discreete aunswere, setting God before his eyes, Gen. 39. Hovv can I doe this great wickednes, and so sin against god? He had rather loose his vnlawfull pleasure, then loose God. Holy Dauid, when hee might haue slaine King Saule, chose rather not to offend god, then to reuenge himselfe.

Renouned and chast Susanna, when she might haue offended god without any impeachment, or open knowledge in respect of the world, the thing beeing kept close: yet shee had rather in a good cause, vndergoe any worldly shame, or great wrong & iniury what-soeuer, then to forsake God, her hope, her crowne, & her castle. Loue those thinges which god dooth suffer thee to enioy in this vvorlde, as much as thou wilt, for god dooth giue thee large liberty, so that when there is any occasion of offending god offered, then wee gather our wits together, and looke about vs, as did holy

holie Ioſeph, Dauid, Daniell, & the three chyldren, Suſanna, and the like, louing god aboue all, and in the higheſt degree, rather ſubmitting our ſelues to any torment what ſoeuer, then by offending god to hazzard our ſoules, in euerlaſting torments.

And thy neighbour as thy ſelfe.] Our Sauiour may ſeeme heerein too much to cōmend vnto vs the loue of our neighbor, in that he ioynes it ſo neere vnto the loue of god. How-beit, the loue of god, & the loue of thy neighbour, ſpring both from one fountaine, & from one inward affection, & frō one cauſe, ſo that they cannot be ſeparated or parted a ſunder. Therefore S. Paul ſaith, Hee that loueth his neighbour, hath fulfilled the lawe. Thou canſt not auoid the loue of thy neighbour, but thou muſt ſhake off the loue of god alſo. Wherin we may cleerly ſee, how much god doth account the loue of thy neighbour, that he thinks he is not loued, vnleſſe for his ſake we loue our neighbour alſo. As alſo that God in the 2. table of his lawe, hath ſpoken more largely of the loue of thy neighbor. For the cōmandements of the firſt table are but 4. in nūber, the cōmandements

of

of the second table, are sixe, and yet in the first table, is contayned the loue of God. In the second table, the commandements are all negatiue, but one, which doth shew the seueritie and straitnes thereof, to make vs take the better heede. Therfore our Sauiour saith, Ioh. 13. In this shal they know that you are my disciples, if ye loue one an other. He sayth not that ye are knowne to be my disciples, by working miracles, or by the gift of prophecie; but if yee shall loue one another: for this is the badge of Christians, whereby they are distinguished frō the deuils company.

VVhen our Sauiour Christ taught his disciples, (the time he was conuersant with them) humilitie, patience, contempt of the world, and other christian vertues and duties: the perswasion of loue, charitie, and good will, he reserued to his last supper, to the intent that hee might most firmly imprint the loue of our neighbour, into the harts and memories of his disciples. For this is giuen vs by nature, that looke what our friend doth giue vs last in charge, whē he departeth from vs, that stickest longest in our remembrance. In this duty of loue, consisteth the perfection of al christianity.

There-

Therefore S. Paule sayth, that the whole lawe is comprehended in this one thing: Thou shalt loue thy neighbor as thy selfe. He that fulfilleth both these commaundements as he ought, may without blushing appeare before God. Dauid saith, ô Lord I haue loued thy commaundements, and therefore he desired the presence of God, but Adam beeing called, fled from God, & hid himselfe, because hee had disobeyed God: and therefore durst not come into his presence. The prophet saith not, I haue knowne thy law, or I haue kept thy lawe, but I haue loued thy lawe. To keepe thy lawe, is of necessity and feare, but to loue, proceedeth from inward affection. The loue of God is perpetuall, but the loue of the worlde, or of our selues, is but for this life; for the loue of the worlde and of our selues, we indanger our selues, but for the loue of God, we finde a meanes to be pertakers of the kingdome of God, and of euerlasting ioyes. The especiall cause of louing our neighbour, is in respect of his soule. And a good shepheard wil not spare to lay downe his life for his sheepe, and many haue been content to be offered vp, for the confirmation of the faith of others.

Yet in the loue of our neighbours, there is a certaine difference to be had, and all are not equally to be loued, rather the faithful then the infidell, rather kinred then strangers, rather our parents then our children, our other kinred or acquaintance.

Then he said vnto him; Thou hast answered right. J. Christ did more prayse the aunswere of this Lawyer, then his workes, his sayings then his deedes, rather his doctrine then his life, rather his religion, then his behauiour and conuersation. For many mens words and speeches, are woorthy commendation, but their deeds are not so, their words are godly, but their deedes are wicked. It is in vaine to search the misteries of god, and to haue great knowledge, if there be no good workes; for heauen is not wone by words, but by deedes. What shall it profit a man at his dying day to be eloquent and very learned? what good is it to be an excellent Preacher, and to haue an ill conscience. God will not call vs to account, whether we haue beene learned, or wise, or eloquent, but whether we haue doone well. Come giue account of thy stewardship, 2. Cor. chap. 5. VVee shall appeare before the iudgement seate of Christ,

Christ, that euery man may receiue the things which are doone in his body; whether they be good or euill. And then at the latter day of iudgement, when the bookes of our consciences shall be layd open, and our life narrowly examined, it shall goe better with vs, that we haue in sinceritie & truth serued God, with a holy and cleane conscience. Our owne hart & conscience, shall be our chiefest comfort. 1. Ioh. 3.20. If our hart bee against vs, God is greater then our hart. The deuils are most wise and learned, so that no man can goe beyond them, but yet they knowe not howe to be deliuered from euerlasting torments.

Heere-hence also wee are taught, to prayse any good thing, in whom-soeuer it be, yea, although it be in our very enimie. For many are accustomed to despise and to disprayse many excellent gifts & deeds in other, especially if they be found in our enemies, calling them foolish and vnlearned, which indeede are wise and learned. This kinde of people are most bad, be not therfore too blinde, & leane not too much to thy owne froward minde, but giue thy enemie his due, and acknowledge that which is excellent in him.

This

This do.&c. This doe, and thou ſhalt liue.] See how Chriſt doth prouoke vs vnto good works, teaching vs that we ſhould walke in them. He ſaith not, Say this, or beleeue this, but doe this, That is, loue God, and loue thy neighbour, and ſhew forth the vvorkes of charitie. As the Apoſtle ſpeaketh. 1. Ioh. 3. Let vs not loue in word, neither in tunge onely, but indeed & in truth. Hee that ſeeeth his neighbour in neceſſity, & ſhutteth vp his compaſſion from him, how remaineth the loue of God in him. Hee that loueth his neighbour, hath life, and hee that loueth not, abideth in death. 1. Corin. 13. Though wee ſpeake with the tongue of men and Angels, & haue not loue, it were nothing. As the body is ſuſtained by naturall heate, ſo is charitie the life of the ſoule, without the which it is as dead. If thou lu[illegible]teſt, thou haſt a name that thou liueſt, but thou art dead: and if thou findeſt thy ſelfe thus dead, loue and liue. We are tranſlated from death to life, becauſe wee loue the brethren. Nothing is ſo precious vnto vs, as life, whereof this is an euident token, that for the ſame, we can be cōtent to haue an arme, or a leg cut off, and to drink moſt bitter potions. Yet is this life no true lyfe, but

but rather a ſhadow, & an image of death. If we can be content to endure ſuch things for this life, which is of ſo ſhort continuance, how ſhould we beſtirre our ſelues, & what ſhould not wee vndertake, to attaine the glorious life euerlaſting. For Chriſt ſpeaketh not heere of this tranſitorie lyfe, but of euerlaſting life, which is the ſeate & dwelling place of the bleſſed. The Gods of the Gentiles, require the death of infants, and that men ſhould ſley themſelues, but the Lord ſaith by the prophet Ezech. 18. I will not the death of a ſinner, but rather that he returne & liue. Oh how good is our God, who I would were loued of vs as meete is, and that wee could frame our ſelues to obey his holy will: and for thys our loue and holy obedience, requiteth vs not onely with this tranſitory life, but will crowne vs hereafter with eternall ioyes.

But hee willing to iuſtifie himſelfe, ſayd vnto Ieſus; Who is then my neighbour?] Heerein he ſheweth himſelfe to be an hypocrite, that he would iuſtifie himſelfe, as though he had fulfilled the whole lawe of God perfectly, and left nothing vndoone. Our hypocriſie is eſpecially founde in the keeping of the ſecond table, for that is the But. &c.

thing

thing that makes vs appeare in our cullers, & discouereth the visor of our counterfait holines. For many bost thẽselues to be keepers of gods law, & yet faile greatly in charity toward their neighbors. And this is the only way why hipocrites wold not be proued guilty, in that they refuse & draw back to haue their life tried by the Lawe. And therefore by cõtempt, & as it were in a brauery, he saith. Who is my neighbour? and who should I loue, but those of mine own nation? Wheras indeed, without al exception, all man-kind is to be embraced, with one & the selfe-same kind of charitable affection. If Christ had answered, that euery Iew was his neighbor, he wold haue bosted that he had fulfilled the law. For this vvas the qualitie of these Doctors, to aduaunce themselues before men, and to gape after fame & glorie. Therfore our Sauior saith, Wo be to you Scribes & Pharises, for you iustifie your selues before men. And many are of their conditions & qualities, vvhose harts aboũd with hatred & iniquity, which persecute the poore & oppresse the innocent, & seek after reuenge most eagerly, & exercise all cruelty against their neighbors, and yet can make a very faire shew before men.

men. Many doe but dissemble their griefe & iniuries, & when time cõmeth that they may, they wil be reuẽged to the vttermost. The cause of this I know not, but that wee all are of this condition, that we will be sinners, & yet would be counted iust & holy. As by the example of Absolon may appeare, who whẽ he purposed to rise against his Father, and to put him beside his kingdome, that hee might the better bring his matter to passe, he said vnto his father, that he would goe & pay his vowes, which hee vowed vnto the Lord in Hebron. And by such holy dissembling, he couered his treason. Heliodorus, willing to spoile the temple, fained another cause. Haman seeking the destruction of Mardoche⁹ & the Iews, went to the king, saying; There is a people scattred among the prouinces of thy kingdom, & they do not obey the kings lawes, therfore it is not the kinges profit to suffer them. Caiphas could say, that if they let Christ alone, the Romaines would take away their place & the nation. Not that hee had any care of the Common-wealth, but his stomacke was full of hatred. So Iudas finding faulte vvith the expence of the oyntment, sayd; This might haue beene

sold,

ſold & giuen to the poore, not being moued there-vnto through charitie, but becauſe hee was a thiefe, and bare the bagge. The ſonnes of Iacob, when they ſold their brother Ioſeph, willing to iuſtifie themſelues before theyr Father, and to cleere themſelues from all offence, brought their brothers garment, ſtayned with blood, as though nothing might be layde to theyr charge. So Herod purpoſing to kil Chriſt, made a ſhewe that he would goe & vvorſhip Chriſt. The wicked Iudges woulde haue cleered themſelues, to be farre from the offence which they layde to Suſannas charge. But let all theſe vnderſtand which diſſemble with their double hart, that there will come a time, when all ſhall bee reuealed, as the trechery of Abſolon, Heliodorus & Herods was, & if not in this world, yet in another.

He ſayth he loueth God, and yet maketh queſtion who is his neighbour. But he that loueth not his neighbour, whom hee ſeeth daily, how ſhall hee loue God whom hee hath not ſeene? He ſpeaketh ſuſpiciouſly, as though a man might loue God, and yet neuertheleſſe be cruell and hurtfull to his neighbour. The Iewes, they had onelie

respect to them of their owne nation, supposing it was lawfull for them to hate aliants and forrenners, and to let them alone, without dooing them any benefit or good at all. But the name of neighbour dooth extend it selfe to a further compasse, to wit vnto all men. Forasmuch as oftentimes it chaunceth, that hee which is nighest to vs in birth or country, is farther from vs in affection and loue, then our very foe.

And Iesus aunswered and said, A certaine man went downe from Ierusalem to Iericho.] This might bee, for Ierusalem was in the high mountaine Sion, and Iericho in a low place. Besides, there was a desert betwixt Ierusalem and Iericho, where passengers were spoyled by theeues, and where Zedechias the King vvas taken by by the Captaines of the king of Babel, when he fled from Ierusalem. Some apply this man that was woũded by theeues vnto Adam, and vnto man-kinde: the priest and the Leuite vnto the sacrifices of the old lawe, and Christ vnto the Samaritane which healed man-kind, being spoiled by the deuils temptations, of the gifts & graces of God, the deuill beeing compared heere vnto theeues.

Some compare the man that came from Ierusalem to Iericho, vnto a sinner that falleth from the estate of grace, vnto the deformity of sin. But how far this is from the sence and true meaning, euery man may perceiue. For the chiefe scope that our Sauiour aimeth at, is to shewe who is our neighbour. For hee is our neighbour that can do vs any good, whether he be hethen or Christian, faithfull or vnfaithfull, good or euill. We ought to loue God more then our selues, & our neighbour as our selues. Euery one liuing is our neighbor, who although he be euill, yet may come to a better course of life; if hee so continue, wee must seeke to winne him by our example and good exhortation. They that are in the estate of misery, are chiefely our neighbours, and they that haue compassion of other mens distresses, and are willing to helpe them, doe most of all performe the dutie of neighbours.

By this man which went downe from Ierusalem to Iericho, Christ vnderstandeth any man of what state and condition soeuer he be the poore, abiect, humble, sad, heauie, and destitute of our helpe, and in a worde to conclude, euery one to whom

we

we may do good. Consider therfore thou that art rich, that the poore man is thy neighbour; thou that art wise, that thou art bounde to helpe the simple and the ignorant; thou that art healthfull, remember him that is sick and comfortlesse, and that Christ hath commended him vnto thee: if thou beest ioyfull and in prosperitie, that the band of loue and charity doth make thee to open the bowels of compassion, towards him that is in affliction and misery. By him that went downe from Ierusalem to Iericho, Christ vnderstandeth all that are in neede and necessity, to whom hee would haue thee to shew compassion and mercy after the example of the Samaritane. Not onely the poore and distressed, but also the rich and wealthy, are here contained vnder the title of neighbours.

A certaine man cam down.] Principallie this is to be referred to the poore man, vvhich leadeth a solitary life, alone by him selfe, hauing no companion nor comforter, being left and forsaken in a manner of all. Euery man will visite the rich man, and keepe companie vvith him, euerie one prayseth hym, and vvaiteth vpon him. But the poore mans estate is lamentable,

 who

who suffreth his miserie alone, and scarce a neighbour to make any question of him, or to make any inquirie after him. If the rich be sicke, Phisitians are sent for, & hee hath many friendes, and many helps: the poore man in his sicknes hath small helpe, liueth alone, & dieth alone. Ierusalem had many friends in her prosperity, but beeing in distresse, they left her all alone. Therefore shee weepeth, saying; All my friends haue despised mee, and are become mine enemies. The rich in their distresse, haue friends at will, and more then they would, but where are they that helpe the poore, and they are woorthy of commendation; and therefore no maruell if Christ doe so point out a mercifull man, with this example of wonder.

The poore-man suffereth his miserie alone, and no man will vouchsafe to know him, neither is there any reckning made of him. It may well be said. The poore man went downe from Ierusalem to Iericho; for the rich men they rise, and are promoted vnto honour, but as for the poore, they haue many hinderances, and euery man keepeth them downe, they are in a manner cast downe head-long, & made to goe

from worse to worse. He went from Ierusalem to Iericho; that is, frõ riches to pouertie, from prosperity to aduersity, from a quiet, to a troublsome life. The poore man that hath not to bring vp, or to preferre his children, dooth breake his sleepe with diuers troublesom cares. The wheeles of a clocke are alwayes running, and what is the cause, but the weights that pull them down? so is necessity as the heauy weights that hang at the wheeles of a clocke, that neuer suffreth him to take any rest.

God hath knit together all man-kinde with a holy band of fellowship, and surely the Lord for no other cause hath set down the name of a neighbour in his lawe, but that hee might more louingly inuite vs to the loue one of another. But because men being blinded with a natural kind of pride, and selfe-liking, cannot thinke so well of others, as of themselues, therefore they refuse to doe the duties of christianitie and charity. Whereas nature it selfe beeing our director, teacheth vs that we were created one for another.

And fell among theeues.] And vvhat could the thieues get at a pore mans hand, according to that of the Poet; That an

emptie passenger can sing pleasantly before theeues. Whom doth the world persecute but the poore? whom doth the rich man vex but the poore? Euery man bringeth gifts to the rich man, but the poore man he meetes with shauing cheere. Pro. 21.7. The poore man is matter for the rich man to work vpon, and to trouble him in the lawe. The Kites make no pray of Hawkes, but of silly fearefull byrdes: So the welthy striue not with their mates, and and such as are able to hold them tack, but with poore men, whom they knowe they may eyther bend or breake.

And as the Wise-man speaketh, as the Asse is meate for the Lyon, so is the poore the rich mans pray. And if it be so, vvhat maruell is it that the poore man fell into the hands of theeues? Are not they to be compared vnto Wolues and Lyons, that oppresse the poore by great exactions, & by raysing rents, that they are not able to liue vpon? Howe can Land-lords and great-men cleere themselues from thys offence? Yea, Merchants and such manner of people, vvho ouer-reach the poore in bargaining and paiments. So that in euery Common-wealth, the waies and streetes

are full of these manner of theeues.

If any of these doe change theyr course, it is because they rather feare the tribunall seate of Gods majestie in heauen, then the Iudges and Magistrates of the earth. Yf they doe not alwayes play the theeues, yet surely their minde is most ready. So harlots, although they doe not alwayes offend GOD, yet theyr resolute purpose is accounted mortall sinne. The prophet Esay spake aright, when hee sayd, chap. 1. 23. Thy Princes are rebellious, and companions of theeues; euery one loueth gyfts, & followeth after rewards, they iudge not the fatherlesse, neither doth the widdowes cause come before them. And in this sort the poore may be said to fal into the hands of robbers.

And they robbed him of his rayment.] Robbed.
The rich which should be as parents vnto the pore, to help them, do often shew themselues to be like rauening wolues, & whom they ought to clothe, them they spoile and leaue naked. Thou that art rich keepest the poore mans pledge in thy hand, suffering him to perrish in his miserie, and hauing forfaited bands vnto thee, thou makest him to vnderstand what extortion

meanes,

meanes; so farre of is it, that thou doost open the bowels of pitty & compassion vnto him. Iob. sayth, chap. 12. 6. The Tabernacles of robbers doe prosper, & chap. 20. 19. Hee hath vndone many, and forsaken the poore, and hath spoyled houses which he builded not. Extortioners haue spoyled the people, saith the prophet Esay.

Wounded. And wounded him.] The woundes of the poore, is the griefe of his hart; beside the extremitie vvhich is shewed against him. Which things are as grieuous; if not more grieuous, then any outward wounds can be.

Departed. And departed.] As Wolues beeing satisfied with dead carkasses. Ezech. 22. 27. cõplaineth of such in his time; Her Princes in the midst thereof, are like VVolues, rauening the pray, to shed blood, and to destroy soules, for theyr own couetous lucre. And theyr prophets haue daubed thẽ with vntempered morter. The people of the land haue they violently oppressed, by spoyling and robbing, and haue vexed the poore and the needy: yea, they haue oppressed the strangers against right. And I sought for a man among them, that shold make

make vp the hedge, and stande in the gap before mee for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I founde none. Therefore haue I poured forth my indignation vpon them, and consumed them with the fire of my wrath: Theyr owne waies haue I rendred vpon their heads, saith the lord God. If rich men woulde call themselues to better remembrance, and repent themselues of theyr dooings, the recompence vvere halfe made. But the more is the pitty, they remember no such matter, and goe away without rebuke or blame, and without remorce.

Leauing him halfe dead.] When vpon any exigent thou takest away the poore mans oxe or his cow, doost thou not leaue him halfe dead, seeing thereby his life is maintained. When thou castest him into prison, hee cannot labour for his liuing, neither can he pay his debt euen awhit the sooner. And not onely himselfe, but his whole familie is in great miserie, do therefore to him, as thou wouldest be done vnto in the like case, let thy hart relent, and worke a deede of charitie, release him, forgiue him, and God will pay thee & blesse thy store; if in the meane time thou be not

so

so forgetfull, that thou callest not to remembrance hovv many wayes, and after what sort God hath released and forgiuen thee. Remember what ill successe he had, that would not forgiue his fellow seruant. Math. 18. When thou pinchest the laborer in his hire and wages, thou leauest him halfe dead. Iam. 5. 4. Ecclus. 34. 22. The bread of the needfull is the life of the pore, hee that defraudeth him thereof, is a man of blood. Hee that taketh away his neighbours liuing, slaieth him, and hee that defraudeth the laborer of his hire, is a bloodshedder. Deut. 24. 10. to 16. Ecclus. 7. 20. 21. & 33. 29. Le. 19. 13. It is no maruel that that is called the life of man, without the which hee cannot liue, and in taking away that which should be his liuing, although hee liue after a sort, yet is hee through sorrow, hart-broken, & as a man halfe dead. And so are the poore, the widdowes, the Orphants, and the afflicted, dealt withall in this life. But how our Sauiour exhorteth vnto charitie and mercy, as in the wordes following.

Priest. And by chaunce there came downe, a certaine priest that way, and when he sawe him, he passed by on the other side.] And

it

it chaunced that a certaine priest was going a iourny, which lay the very same way, and whereas for the very order and profession of priest-hoode, vvhich he had taken him vnto, hee ought cheefelie aboue others, to haue fulfilled the commaundement of GOD: yet notwithstanding, himselfe beeing a Ievve, saw one that was a Iewe, and beeing himselfe a man of Ierusalem, sawe one of Ierusalem spoyled, wounded, and lying halfe dead & yet passed by, no whit mooued with any drop of pietie and compassion. And although the Iewes by the priuiledge of adoption, were seperated from all other Nations, that they should be Gods holy inheritance, yet such was their barbarous, vnciuill, & hethenish contempt one of another, as though there had beene no acquaintance, no fellowship among thẽ; as though they had not beene people of one and the selfe same Nation. Therefore our Sauiour Christ doth heere in this Parable, describe theyr cruell neglect of charitable affection, whereof theyr owne consciences did pronounce them to be guiltie.

The couetousnes of this world hath offred violence vnto iustice, & she being thus disgra-

disgraced, hath ascended vp into heauen, so that it is hardly or not at all to bee seene on the earth. They that shoulde be most bountifull, are for the most part too hard-harted; and they that haue theyr liuings to be good to the poore, beeing blinded by couetousnes, dissemblingly passe by the poore, neither will they take notice of thē, neyther will they enter into any feeling affection, or inward consideration of theyr miseries; the Lord make them to remember themselues, that they may learne to be mercifull. For they are the seruants & ministers of him, that is most mercifull, and who causeth his raine to fall as well vppon the vniust as the iust.

God gaue no possession to the Leuites, because he was theyr inheritance, whereby is signified, that he that then left the priests without any earthly possession, would also haue it so nowe, that their harts should be be estranged, from the loue of thys world, and earthly possessions, and from the greedie desire of wealth; looking for no more then that which shoulde serue their turne. Therefore, if the Minister serue God, and imploy his vocation diligently, let him not feare, seeing the Lord is his portion.

The Lord commaunded the people of Israell to allot out Citties to the Leuites. Numb. 35. 2. which he did to this intent, that they shold not be intangled in worldly busines. Pharao gaue inheritance vnto the priests, & when all the Egyptians were inforced to sell theyr land for foode, the priests were spared. But now in these daies, the Ministers liuings are so curtold, and theyr maintenaunce for the most part so poore and bare, that they are in a manner inforced with Saint Paule, to make Tents, & to seeke wayes how they may liue, there are so many Church-robbers euery where.

And likewise also a Leuit, when hee was come neere to the place, went and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.] A Leuite also passing by the same way, at whose hand a man might iustly haue looked for the due obseruing and keeping of Gods commaundement: because he beeing a man dedicated to the Temple, was a minister of Gods holy seruice, and therefore ought to haue beene a man of deuotion, yet shewed small token thereof. For this man, euen as the other had doone, though hee sawe the wounded man vvell enough, yet passed forth on his way, and Leuite.

did

did no helpe at all to his brother & countriman of the same Citty, that himselfe was of. And such as the priest was, such also was the Leuite, the inferiour taking example of the better. There was no pitty, no compassion, no bowels of mercy in any of them both. According to that of the prophet Ieremie. chap. 8. 10. Euery one from the least to the greatest, is giuen to couetousnesse, from the prophet euen to the priest. Full little were they exercised in almes deedes, and in the workes of charitie, which should haue giuen good example vnto others.

Samaritane. Then a certaine Samaritane, as he iournied, came neere vnto him, and when hee saw him, he had compassion on him.] The Samaritanes were not of the Iewes, but strangers and idolaters. For when Salmanasar the King of the Assyrians had caried away captiue, the tenne tribes of Israel, for theyr manifolde offences, out of Samaria, into Assyria, the king, least the land should be wast, placed diuers people of diuers nations, there to inherite & to inhabit. Who not knowing GOD, but worshipping idols, and at the beginning of their dwelling not fearing the Lord, the Lorde sent

Lyons

Lyons among them, which slewe them. Which thing when it came to Salmanasers eares, the King of the Assyrians, taking counsell with his Princes and Nobles, hee sent thether one of the priestes, vvhich he had brought from Samaria, to teach them how they should feare the Lord. By whō they hauing heard the Law of Moses, with a certaine reuerence, beganne to worship God, yet so that they serued theyr idols also. These did the Iewes hate, & they were despised of them, whom they called Samaritans, to whom they obiected that they had deuils, because vnder idols they worshipped deuils. And this thing was layde vnto our Sauiour in great reproch, that he was a Samaritane, and had a deuill.

Then a certaine Samaritane.] Heere we are fully taught, not only who is our neighbour, but how we must bestow our almes, and in what measure. First, the Samaritane seeing the vvounded man, was mooued with compassion; therfore there is required in vs, an affection of mercy, whereby we shold think other mens distresses to pertaine euen to our selues. The minde must bee throughly affected and indued with this quality, according to that of the

Apo-

Apostle, Heb. 13. 3. Be mindfull of them that are bound, as though ye were in bands with them. For Paule saith, that there are certaine wicked men, without naturall affection. Rom. 1. 30.

After the priest and the Leuite came the Samaritane, who espying the man that had beene robbed, and lay halfe aliue, halfe dead, and maruelling what the matter was, hee drew neere vnto him, and perceauing the extreame misery of the man, was moued with pitty & compassion toward this Iewe, whereas himselfe was a Samaritane, and yet the Iewes doe very sore abhor & hate all Samaritans. For all his iourney hee doth not passe by him, but commeth and draweth neere vnto him; neither doth he only pitty his case with lamentable words, and so make hast onward on his iourney, and to his busines, as most men doe. For as S. Iames saith, chap. 2. 15. If a brother or a sister be naked, and destitute of daily foode, and one of you say vnto them, Depart in peace, warme your selues, and fill your bellies, notwithstanding yee giue the not those things which are needfull to the body, what helpeth it? The Samaritane comes neere, putteth to his helping hand,

such

ſuch phiſick as he had he applieth, he doth not excuſe the matter that he is no phiſiti-on, but for the preſent neceſſity, hauing wine and oyle about him, and knowing thē to be good, firſt cleanſeth his wounds with wine, & then ſupples them with oile vntill better remedies could be had. Hee thinks not of the loſſe of his wine & oyle, and what hinderance it was vnto him, but is glad it ſerued to ſo good a purpoſe. He lights off from his horſe, to ſet the woun-ded man thereon, the wounded man being vnable, he helps him vp with his hands, he directs him forward, committing the care of him to no other but to himſelfe, & ſee-ing he could not bring him into his owne houſe, hee conuayeth him into an Inne. There hee ſpares not, eyther for coſtes or paines, and he lookes to him him ſelfe, be-cauſe in Innes and ſtrange houſes, ſuch poore mens miſeries are little regarded, neither are they tended as they ought. And ſeeing his buſines required haſt, & that he could no longer tarry, hee makes further prouiſion for him, he takes forth out of his purſe, ſo much mony as might ſerue, till his returne, & deliuereth it vnto the Hoſt, re-queſting the Inne-keeper that he ſhould

see the wounded man well attended and kept, vntill such time as his iourney being done, he should returne the same way back againe, saying; Mine Host, ye haue mony for the purpose, see to this man at my cost & charge, that if ye shall bestow any thing aboue this sum that I haue deliuered you, you for your part shall not be a looser one mite by it, reckon it to me whē I returne again this way, & whatsoeuer ye shal lay out vpō him, I wil pay it you againe. He promiseth to returne, & al his gesture & behauiour was, to shew that he could not be in quiet till he saw him well & whole againe. Behold heere a most plentiful & wonderfull measure of loue & christian charity.

And a great shame it is to christians, that heathen people are more mercifull, yea, many of the Recusants herein excell vs, & shal no doubt rise vp in iudgement against vs. If we be slow in ordinary distresses, yet in great extreamities let vs shew our selues forwardly, at leastwise for the shame of the world, if Gods mercy doe not mooue vs. Shew forth the fruits of thy profession, & let not faith be dead within, & let not God and the world, & thy own conscience condemn thee. Be not as the rest of the world,

who

who either passe by & regard not, or else giue but some good words & wishes, or if they giue any releefe, it is but very slender, so that it doth the poore but little good. Alas, what is the releefe of a peny or a shilling, to him that standeth in neede of a pound. Yet the fashion of the world is, to make great boast of this slender reliefe, like vnto the boasting Pharise, as though we were great almes folks to be wondered at and chronicled. But who wil like this Samaritane, seeing a poore man in great distresse, light off from his horse, and hinder his iourney, & forgetting his affaires, bend himselfe wholy for the time to help in such a case. The prouerb is, that many a little makes a mickle, & we think when we giue somwhat, that euery one will likewise; but God knowes almes-folks are very rare, for how should it be a thing so greatly cōmendable, if it were common. Little knoweth the ful belly what the hungry belly means, and if we did feele for a while the penury and scarsity of the poore, wee would be more willing to releeue them, and also we should manifestly see and perceaue, how small the number is of them, that giue no more but poore Peter pence.

Seeing this Samaritane ſhewed greater kindnes, thē eyther the Prieſt or the Leuit, heere-hence we may learne, that if we will be accounted more holy then other, & of greater perfection, that we doe not ſo behaue our ſelues, that our conuerſation be worſe then ſouldiours & publicans. You ſee that the prieſt and the Leuit, both of them were of the elect people of the Iews, and of that tribe which was prepared to doe God greateſt ſeruice, and which were iudged the holieſt among the people, as they ſhould haue beene, and yet was there found in them, neyther charity nor compaſſion. But this Samaritane which was a gentile & an idolater, which had no knowledge of God, & was deſpiſed of the Iews, ſo that it was counted a reproach, if a Iewe did talke with a Samaritane, or had any buſines, or any thing to doe with him; this Samaritane I ſay, ſhewed him ſelfe more godly then the Iewes, and not better then the cōmon ſort, but better then the prieſts and the Leuits, which did teach & exhort to vertue and holines, and which ſhould haue giuen woorthy examples, like lights vpon a hill. So the prieſts of the temple, which deſcended of the holy patriarkes,

Abra-

Abraham, Isaac, and Iacob, did slander our Sauiour Christ, who was reuerently vsed of the woman of Canaan, which came of cursed Cham. He found not that faith in Israel, which he found among the Canaanites. I feare me it wil fall out, (& I would in this I might be found a lyer,) that in the day of iudgement many publicans, and of the common sort, shall be preferred before vs, which preach the word, and exhort other vnto vertue, and make great boast of Religion, seeing many of those whom we doe teach, doe farre passe vs in life & conuersation, and may teach vs, if not in words & exhortation, yet in godly works. As the Lord saide to many proud Pharises, that publicanes and sinners should goe before them, into the kingdom of heauen. Many shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit downe with Abraham, Isaac, and Iacob, when as the children of the kingdome shall be cast out into vtter darknes. Which is enough to teach vs, to despise no man, but alwayes to liue in holy feare and humility. For before God the works of charity and godlines, are more esteemed, then either learning, wisedome, or the glorious shew of Religion. For God

hath not respect of the persons or of high degrees, but God regardeth more the inward affection, and the perfection of charity. The Priest and the Leuite were of higher degree then the Samaritane, but the Samaritane shewed himselfe the better man. For the priest and the Leuit being of the same nation, should haue had compassion on the wounded Iewe, but they did nothing lesse, passing by, and regarding not.

Heere also we learne, how few there be that haue mercy on their poore neighbors, when of three there was but one that had compassion. And such are our times, which in steede of mercy, exercise cruelty towarde our neighbours. Then among three yet there was some mercy found, but nowe you shall scarce finde one among a hundred, which remembreth & releeueth the estate of the poore and distressed, as daily experience sheweth. Nowe a man may see a great company of poore & Lazarus people, lie at the church dores, & all the company passe by, neither is there one among twenty that wil turne his eyes vnto the poore, so farre off are they from comforting them, eyther in words or deedes.

And most lamentable it is, that there be many poore housholders that are ashamed to shew their distresse, yet is their estate well knowne of the rich & wealthy neighbors, which can scarcely find in their harts to talke of them, or to be sorry for their necessity. And if they be requested to shew releefe, & to giue somwhat, their eares are shut vp, and their stony harts cannot relent, to heare their pittious moane, but as though they heard nothing, they dissemble all. But if thou wilt not hearken vnto my words, haue som regard to gods word, Pro.21,13. Hee that stoppeth his eare at the cry of the poore, hee shall also cry and not be heard. The which thing the most patient Iob considering with a mercifull heart, maketh manifest his godly disposition, as a patterne of mercy vnto all, chap. 31, 16. If I restrained the poore of their desire, or haue caused the eyes of the widdow to faile, or haue eaten my morsels alone, & the fatherlesse hath not eaten therof, (for from my youth he hath growne vp with me as with a father, and from my mothers wombe I haue beene a guide vnto her,) if I haue seene any perish for want of cloathing, or any poore without couering,

if

if his loines haue not blessed me, because hee was warmed vvith the fleece of my sheepe. If I haue lift vp my hand against the fatherlesse, when I sawe that I might helpe him in the gate. Let my arme fall from my shoulder, & my arme be broken from the bone.

Thirdly, we are taught by this example, to shew charity and mercy, not niggardly, but in a large and plentifull measure, for God regardeth a cheerefull giuer. This Samaritane had not onely compassion, but went to him, poured oyle into his wounds, bound them vp, brought him to an Inne, prayed the Host to haue care of him, and left money in his Hosts hands. Compare this example to the rich man, who would not refresh poore Lazarus at his gate, yea, Lazarus found more mercy of his dogges then of him, for they licked his sores. But as the one found fauour with God, so the other no doubt feeleth eternall torments. VVhat is a slender releefe to him which standeth in neede of great succour, bring him into thy house, and supply his wants; if thou wilt not bring him into thy house, goe to the poore where they are, and shew thy almes as God hath enriched thee. This

Samari-

Samaritane was no penny-father, no nig-gard, his hands were not ſhut, but moſt li-berally and plentifully did he releeue the wounded man. Let this Samaritane be thy example,and be it knowne vnto thee, that whatſoeuer thou beſtoweſt on the poore, thou giueſt into the hand of Chriſt, which will recompence it with aduantage. For many are his bleſsings,which he hath, and may heereafter beſtow vpon vs,in reſpect both of our body & ſoule. Pinch not thy ſelfe therefore, which ſurely thou doeſt, when thou doſt not help the poore.

By this Samaritane alſo we are taught, not to be ouer-ſquemiſh in beholding the ſores & wounds of the poore,as many too daintily turne their eyes away,& ſtop their noſes. This Samaritane, hee handled the poore mans wounds,and bound them vp. Chriſt humbled himſelfe, and healed eue-ry diſeaſe among the people, and refuſed not their company.

Fifthly, in giuing our almes, we muſt not conſider his Countrey or perſonage, his qualities or deſerts,that thereby we ſhould with-draw our hand from doing good,but onely we muſt remember he or ſhe is our neighbour, as alſo we muſt haue an eye to

their

their great wants & necessities. Many are not willing to giue almes, but to their kindred, & such as they know, othersome fall into the examination of the liues of the poore, whether they be of good or euil behauiour. This sheweth mercy not to one of his owne nation, but to an enemy. Refraine not therefore thy liberality from thy neighbor in his necessity, although he haue spoken very badly of thee, although he be thy enemy. Yea, let him be a stranger, whō thou neuer sawest in thy life before, yet cōsider that he is thy neighbour, & that he is made according to the image & likenes of God, let that be thy looking glasse, & help his miserable estate It is the duty of iustice, to enquire into other mens faults, but the property of mercy is to haue compassion.

Last of all, heereby we are warned, not onley to be inwardly affected, but also to put to our helping hand. Many rich people will take pitty, but there-with-all they haue many delaies and diuers excuses.

Which now of these three thinkest thou was neighbour vnto him that fell among the theeues? And he said; He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Iesus vnto him, Goe & doe thou likewise.] Now Christ

com-

cometh to the application of the parable, & to answer this learned Doctor. And this is the conclusion of the parable, where our Sauiour reserueth the waightiest matter to the last. Shewing that not onely he is our neighbour, which may doe vs good, but he also that standeth in neede of our helpe. Whom we must help, not onely in words & passionate speeches, but also in comfortable releefe, which is acceptable both before God & man. The more mercifull that any one is, the neerer doth he come to the nature of God. Delay not thy mercy, put so acceptable a work in practise, be not slow, goe & doe thou likewise. Titus the Emperor would say, that he lost a day, when in that day hee had not done one good turne, to some man or other.

Iesus commended this Doctor, that he had made a right answer & a true, mouing him there-with-all, that his life should be like and answerable vnto his words, & that he shold be willing, rather to be like to the Samaritane, then to the priest, or the Leuite, who as men liuing to the behoofe of themselues and no more, had little or no regard of any other, but the Samaritane, where by birth and kinde hee was enemie

vnto

vnto the Iew, in charity and loue became his neighbour.

All the vniuersall progeny of mankind, being through the malice of sathan, spoiled out of the cloathing of innocencie, sore wounded with all kind of vice, cast a side, destitute of helpe, halfe dead, and euen at the next dore to desperation, Iesus comming downe from heauen, vouchsafed to visite and see them. And to the ende hee might the better helpe them, by taking mans nature on him, he came very neere to man, both seeing and being seene, hearing, and being heard, feeling, and being felt; and hauing pitty on our extreame distresse, he tooke vpon him our sinnes, and beare them on his owne body, he did in his own proper person suffer that we had deserued. The same Iesus hath seene to the curing of vs, who neuer turned his face from any sinner, were he neuer so vile or abiect. Whereas the proud and disdainfull priest passeth by him, euen then giuing vp the ghost, whereas the Leuit neglecteth him, bidding God haue mercy vpon him, and so going foorth on his way as hee had begun, least he should sustaine some hinderance or damage in the things of the

world, while hee helpeth his neighbour. Iesus this Samaritane hath his Hosts and In-holders, to whom he leauing the earth, and ascending into heauen, doth commit the wounded man to be wel looked vnto, promising a reward in heauen, if through the aboundance of charity, they shall haue laied out any thing more, then was commaunded, for the healing of the pittious body. And by these In-holders, are to be vnderstoode, the Apostles, Ministers, and Preachers,by whose painfull preaching,he doth cure and helpe mankind, and gathereth the same from the violence of theeues, into the inner roome of the church, where the wounds of sinne are healed.

By the doctrine of the gospell, our very enemies must be loued, and by Christ his example, the poore, the strangers, the fatherlesse. and widdow, are to be releeued by our almes and charitable deuotion. For true it is that Christ is loued in his members,in whom likewise he is offended,whē their weake consciences are offended, and is put to open shame of the world, when they be put to shame, and is put to death whē they be put to death, & wants releefe, when they are in need and necessity.

The

The fountaine of mercy is the loue of thy neighbour, for if thou doest not affect the party, thy mercy will soone grow key colde. And that thou mayest take liking to the party, yea, although he be thy enemy, if it be no more but for Gods cause, and at his request, mark what Christ saith. If ye loue mee, keepe my commaundements, whereof this is one, Loue your enemies, doe good to them that hate you. Kill thy anger and thy wrath, bury thy hatred, and tread it vnder thy foote. GOD hath been fauourable vnto thee, doe somwhat at his request, doe more for his loue. Heb. 6, 10. God is not vnrighteous, that he will forget your works and labour, that proceedeth of loue. Heb. 13, To doe good, and to destribute forgette not, for with such sacrifices God is pleased, 2, Cor. 9, 6, 7. Hee which soweth little, shall reape little, and he that soweth plenteously, shall reape also plenteously. Let euery man doe according as hee is disposed in heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loueth a cheerefull giuer, 1, Iohn, 3, 17. Who so hath this worldes good, and seeth his brother haue neede, and shutteth vp his compassion from him, how dwelleth

the

the loue of God in him. Tob. 4,7. Giue almes of thy goods, and turne neuer thy face from any poore man, and then the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee. Be mercifull after thy power, if thou hast much giue plenteously, if thou hast little, doe thy diligence gladly to giue of that little. For so gatherest thou thy selfe a good reward in the day of necessity, Pro. 19, 17. Hee that hath pitty vpon the poore, lendeth vnto the Lorde, and looke what he layeth out (he shall loose nothing) it shall be paide him againe. Psalme, 41. Blessed is hee that considereth the poore and needy, the Lorde shall deliuer him in the time of trouble. The Lorde preserue him, and keepe him aliue, that hee may be blessed vppon earth, and deliuer not thou him into the will of his aduersaries and enemies. The Lorde comfort him when he lyeth sicke vpon his bed, make thou all his bed in his sicknes. Gal. 6,10. While we haue time let vs doe good to all men, and specially to them which are of the householde of faith. 1, Timo. 6, 17. Charge them which are rich in the world, that they be ready to giue, and gladly to destribute, laying vp in store for themselues, a good founda-

foundation against the time to come, that they may obtaine eternall life.

In conclusion, gather this lesson also, to see the mildnes of our sauiour Christ, how largely, and modestly, and delightfully, he aunswereth and satisfieth his enemy, which came to intrap him, that wee may learne with all modesty and good will, to answere them that seeke our hurt. Yea, all superiours are heereby aduertised, not to be too austere to them, that demaund any thing of them. See you not how Christ answered this crafty Lawyer to the full, when he might haue cut him off in shorter termes, or else aunswered him with silence.

See also how by these demaunds, and by euery little occasion, our Sauiour deliuered many profitable & wholsome instructions. By this example righteous men, & the friends of God, and the louers of mens soules, are glad vpon the least matter offered, to profit as many as they may, and for the loue of God and their neighbours, to shew forth many good works. According to the exhortation of our Sauiour Christ, Math. 5, 16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, & glorifie your father which is in heauen.

In

In another sence, Ierusalem is sayde to signifie Paradice, where-hence man vvas cast out, and depriued of all spiritual gyfts and graces, as immortalitie, righteousnes, and holines, the true knowledge and feare of God. Iericho signifieth this world, and the calamities and miseries thereof, & the diuers infirmities where-with man is oppressed by sinne. By theeues, the deuil and his kingdome, euill counsell, company, example. By garments, heauenly graces, and the perfection which man had before his fall. By wounds, his infirmities, & the corruption of his whole nature, which hindereth vs that we cannot loue and serue god as we ought. By the priest and the Leuite, the sacrifices of the old Testament, which could not deliuer vs from sinne and death. By the Samaritane Christ, which deliuered vs from sinne, death, the deuill & hell. By the Samaritanes iournying, Christ his descending from heauen, and taking vpon him the nature of man. By comming neere, vndertaking the affections of man, beeing like vnto him in all thinges, sinne onely excepted. Had compassion. The cause that mooued him, was his mercy, & not our deserts. He bindeth vp our woūds

when he forgiueth our sinnes, and healeth our manifold infirmities, & asswageth our sorrowes. Oyle is the gladsome tydings of the gospell, comforting & raysing vp our distressed consciences. VVine signifyeth the law, which dooth sharply vrge and accuse the conscience, as the wine doth straiten the wound, doth purge it, and make it cleane from putrefaction. He put him on his owne beast, so hath Christ taken vpon his owne body our infirmities. Brought him to an Inne, and made prouision for him. Christ hath brought vs into the Church, according to that of Saint Paule, Whom he hath chosen, them also hath hee called. For those who are not called, are no members of his Church, neither any of his people. The two pence heere named, are the Lawe and the Gospell, the two Testaments, by the ministery wherof the church is instructed & gouerned, & so shall be to the end of the world. The law doth terrefy, the gospell doth comfort, and proposeth Christ vnto vs, to be our spirituall Phisitian, which doth mollifie the wounds of out conscience, with the oyle of his grace. The Host is euery faithful & painfull Minister & preacher, which with conscience taketh

care of the flocke committed to his charge. Who is willed to take care of his flock, and commanded so to do frō god, & that in the gouernment of the church, they shew not themselues vnfaithful & negligent. Who may not ad mans deuises to gods word, but in expounding therof, must direct his full scope, to the proportion of faith, & beeing also painful in his profession, no doubt he shal receiue the promised reward. And if any trouble & persecution grow therupon, let vs refer al to Gods good wil & plesure, & in all extremities, learne to depend vpon Gods prouidence. In our painfull calling, God will assist vs with his grace and heauenly blessing, & will strengthen vs in the continuance therof, giue vs courage, & make vs constant. And what dangers soeuer fall out, God will not then and there forsake thee, but hee will stand by thee, as the Phisitian standeth by the sicke man, or the Nurse by the chylde. In all extreamities hee will be thy guyde and comforter. A faythfull Minister, and a diligent man, shall haue good successe and manie comforts.

Directions for the Minister.

Goe thou and do likewise.] They shew mercy, which haue a fellow feeling, & help

according to their calling and abilitie, as did this Samaritane. And though this doctor of the lawe, might boast much of the fulfilling of the lawe, as many doe, which did neuer fully examine themselues, and their consciences, by the due tryall and touchstone of the law, yet had hee, and so haue we neede of the mediation of Christ, to giue a salue to our sore, & to recouer vs from our corrupion & imperfection. And this doth Christ performe freely, & of his mercie, which mercy we take holde on by faith. And seeing thou hast not yet fulfilled the law, why doost thou brag & boast of thy owne righteousnes. Which is farre from the righteousnes of the law, whereunto our corrupt nature cannot make it selfe subiect. Besides, no man can perfectly fulfill Gods law in this life; here we begin, but else-where we shall end in perfection.

No perfection in this life.

Soli Deo omnis laus, et gloria, et gratia.

The

The Parable of the vnmercifull Seruaunt.

(·.·)

MATH. 18. 21.

Then came Peter to him, and said: Maister, how oft shall my brother sinne against mee, and I shall forgiue him, vnto seauen times? Iesus said vnto him, I say not to thee vnto seauen times, but vnto seauentie times seauen times. Therefore is the kingdome of heauen, likened vnto a certaine king, which would take account of his seruaunts. And when hee had begunne to reckon, one was brought vnto him, which ought him tenne thousand talents. &c.

NExt after the notable example of the mercifull Samaritane, by comparison and contrarietie, the example of the vnmercifull seruant seemeth most worthy of our cōsideration & edification. Euery one ought to forgiue his neighbour that hath offended him, so often as he asketh forgiuenes. According to that which else-where our Sauiour exhorteth, Luke. 17. 3. Take heede to your selues, if thy brother trespasse against thee,

 rebuke

rebuke him, and if he repent, forgiue him. And though he sinne against thee seauen times in a day, and seauen times in a day turne againe vnto thee, saying; It repenteth mee, thou shalt forgiue him. As thys parable doth shewe, by Gods great patience, and by the riches of his mercy, howe ready wee also ought to be to forgiue one another. The kingdome of heauen, may be applyed to the Church of God in thys lyfe, the which God doth rule by his word and by his Spirit, and dooth mightily and miraculously defend it, from all enemies, priuie hypocrites, open Atheists, cruell Tyrants, the deuill, death, sinne, and all the power of hell. God is the King, & wee are his seruants, into whose hands hee putteth his gyfts and graces, that we may employ them to his glory, and the benefit of his Church. And in this sence also we are debters vnto God, because no man can fulfill his law, as hee requireth, but diuers wayes we doe transgresse the same.

1. In the first part, that is in the exhortation to mutual forgiuenes, first he setteth down how far we are indebted vnto God, vnder the person of the seruaunt, that was called to giue an account. Wherby we are giuen

to

to vnderstand, that all of vs shall giue account of those things, we haue done in this body, 2.Cor.5. 10. Hebr. 9. 27. Rom. 2.6. Iohn. 5. 28. Tenne thousand talents doth shewe our infinite debt, and our manifold sinnes and transgressions, more then the hayres of our head. And as he whose debt is infinite, and beeing farre vnable to pay, hath no other meane to helpe himselfe, but to fall downe on his knees, and to craue mercie: so are wee willed by this parable, that seeing we cannot satis-fie for our manifold offences, wee shoulde flie vnto the mercy of God, wherof we haue assured & most precious promises, through the merrites of Christ our Sauiour. By which onely meane satisfaction may be made, & not through our good workes and merits. Which if they were all stretched out to the vtmost aduantage that might be, yet can they come nothing neere, if all were sold, yet payment cannot be made. For in this our corrupt nature, vvho is it that can in the least part thereof, satis-fie Gods lavv? And therefore, that that vvas impossible to the lawe, inasmuch as it was weake because of the flesh, God sending his owne Sonne, in the similitude of sinfull flesh

for

for sinne, condemned sin in the flesh, that wee might flie to him for our satisfaction, and the gracious forgiuenes of our most huge debt, after the example of this seruaunt, which acknowledgeth his great vnworthines and insufficiencie, prayeth for mercie, and obtayneth the same.

Peter puts forth this question after the common custome of men, who would be forgiuen, but are loth to forgiue others. The third or 7. time, is not heere limitted, but rather wee are willed neuer to faint, in so godly a worke of charitie. Luke. 17. 4. and alwaies to frame our selues to be mildly and mercifully disposed, and that our mindes and harts, should be free & cleere from hatred and malice. This is one sort of forgiuenes, all desire of reuenge set apart, to loue him that hath offended thee, & to requite an euill turne with a good, although wee thinke hardly of him according to his desert. Many abuse this doctrine of patience and forgiuenes, caring not what hurt they doe, because we are bound to forgiue. But in this place is meant, that they should be sorry for theyr fault, confesse, and aske forgiuenes. Yet many are so stubborne, that they will not acknowledge their iniu-

 ries,

ries, but adde new vnto the old, how-beit, in this case also, wee are commaunded to forgiue. Another kinde of forginenesse is, when we so receiue him to mercy that hath offended vs, that we thinke well of him, & are fully perswaded, that the remembrance of his sin is forgiuen before God. Which is not onely spoken of priuate iniuries, but of all other offences. Therfore he willeth, that they that are fallen, should be releeued by our mercifull endeuours.

This doctrine is very necessary, because by nature we are for the most part too austere, and sathan sets vs on to this cruell seueritie, that they that cannot be forgiuen, should be driuen to sadnesse and despaire. But heere a question may be made, if wee may beleeue others vpon their words, whē as often-times they breake. Where-vnto we answer, that when such through theyr leuity & inconstancie, abuse our patience, yet asking forgiuenes, wee ought to pardon them, with this wisedome, that after, wee take heede of them, and pray to God to mend them, acknowledging theyr manifold weakenes, and beeing sorry for thē. And because it is a thing in a manner vnpossible to flesh and blood, and most hard

to

to be drawne to mercy and forgiuenesse, especially when the often faults of our brethen, are to be indured, & that wee are wearied with their manifolde offences, therefore the Lord vseth a most fit parable to this purpose. Teaching them that are intractable, & which cannot be intreated in this case, that they prouide but badly in theyr owne behalfe, because they shal find the like measure at Gods hands. This similitude standeth in three comparisons: that is, the Maister is compared to the seruaunt, a great summe to a small debt, and Gods wonderfull and vnspeakable mercy, to our extreame crueltie. All which declare, that we farre more grieuously offend God, then any brother, or enemy, or mortall man can offend vs.

The seruant. &c.

The seruaunt therefore fell downe, and besought him, saying: Maister appease thy anger toward me. &c.

Heere is the patterne of true iustification, which requireth that wee shoulde acknowledge our vnwoorthinesse, and flie vnto Christ our Mediatour. The one is the tryall of our repentance, the other reacheth to the heighth of fayth, whereby wee assure our selues of forgiuenes, through

Christ his merrites.

Then that seruaunts Maister had compassion, and loosed him, and forgaue him the debt.] Heere is declared the order and manner of free iustification; namelie, that GOD doth freely forgiue vs our sinnes, and iustifie vs, that is, hee repureth vs as iust, and dooth discharge vs from the guilt of sinne, for his Sonnes sake; and dooth impute vnto vs the righteousnesse, merrites, and deserts of his Sonne, as though we had perfectly in our persons, fulfilled the law of God.

Concerning forgiuenes, it is either Ecclesiasticall, or ciuill. Ecclesiasticall, when in the publique congregation, by the comfortable tydings of the Gospell, eyther priuately or generally, we receiue the comfort of forgiuenesse of sinnes. Or vvhen vppon the peculiar and particular confession of some one or more, with publique prayer the Minister pronounceth pardon. Ciuill forgiuenesse is, vvhen among our selues, we forgiue one another, not bearing hatred in our harts, for wrongs committed, nor yet thirsting after reuenge.

Some will say we must forgiue one another, therefore we must not defende our

selues,

selues,nor seeke redresse. But there is a difference betwixt a lawfull defence, and priuate reuenge, & God hath appointed the Magistrate to doe right and equitie. After which sort a Christian may defende himselfe, as Paule did, appealing vnto Cæsar. Acts. 15. But priuate reuenge, which is a desire to hurt, proceeding from a wrathful minde, is heere forbidden. As it is written, Rom. 12. Vengeance is mine, I wil repay saith the Lord. And sutes of law in matters of extremitie, (as that must be the last refuge,whē nothing else will preuaile) these sutes of law, I say, with a godly mind, may be followed with charitie. Alwaies reseruing our selues to equitie, & to neighborhood, not caring to sit downe by a little losse, so that we may recouer our own, in any good and indifferent sort.

But heere it was necessary to be spoken, to preuent an obiection, that seeing his maister willed him to be sold, his wife, and children,and all that he had,& payment to be made,that some gather here-hence,that satisfaction may be made for our sinnes,by our part, and through our endeuours. But the prophet Esay in his 53. chapter declareth other-wise. Therefore all of vs being

deb-

debters in this case, are inforced to flie vnto Gods mercy, and to craue the release of this our great debt, which wee can neuer satisfie. Neither doth God alwayes shewe his seueritie at the beginning, that wee being compelled, should seek for release, yea, rather by his free mercy offred vnto vs, hee dooth preuent vs in this case; but onelie in this parable is declared, that if God should deale with vs in extremetie, what shoulde become of vs. As also, if he should exactly require of vs, that which wee are indebted vnto him, how needfull it were for vs, to fall downe vpon our knees, and to sue for fauour. For this is the onely hope of helpe, that sinners haue. Therefore the prophet Dauid being oppressed, with the great waight and burden of his sinnes, cryeth out. psalme 143. Enter not into iudgement with thy seruaunt, ô Lord, for in thy sight shall no man liuing be iustified.

But when the seruaunt was departed, he found one of his felowes, which owed him an hundred pence, and he layde hands on him, and tooke him by the throat, saying; Pay mee that thou owest.] Heere followeth the crueltie of an vnmercifull hart, which shortly after was reuenged vpon it selfe.

2. The ingratitude of the world.

selfe. And heere is declared, the second matter woorthy of noting in this parable, which is the ingratitude of the worlde towards God, and theyr vnmercifull disposition towards theyr neighbour. VVho woulde haue beene so forgetfull, as suddenly, when the greatnes of his Maisters benefite was so fresh in his remembrance, that his hart could be so cruell toward his fellow seruaunt. For surely, if any of vs all, coulde remember Gods great mercy toward our selues, and howe deeply wee are indebted to God, we should neuer find in our harts to shew such extremitie towards others. And therefore he may be poynted at with a note of wonder.

VVho woulde haue doone it but that seruaunt, that gracelesse and vnthankfull creature; little considering that hee would be loth so to be dealt withall himselfe: and as we are wont to say in this case, shewing himselfe vvorse then a Iew or Turke. His cruelty is further expressed, from the person of his fellowe seruaunt, who kneeled downe to him, and could find no mercie, a stonie hart that had no pittie: he coulde haue done no more, if hee had vtterly denied him.

Again, his cruelty is expressed by his gesture, in that he tooke him by the throate, vvithout any former ciuill and curteous means of demaunding; al which did shew a hart fully possessed with cruelty. But that all cruell mindes may somwhat relent, let thē consider the manifold causes to moue them to charitie and forgiuenes.

The first is Gods commaundement. Secondly, because reuenge is the honor due onely vnto God. Thirdly, because we are guiltie of manifold offences, wherein wee desire forgiuenes of God, and therfore we ought to forgiue others. Fourthly, the cōmon peace and quietnes of the Church, which is mighetily troubled by this meanes. Fiftly, our prayers, the most necessary work in this life, are hindered by continuall hatred, which thirsteth after reuenge. And lastly, heereby many waightie affayres of this life are broken of.

Either the second, third, or fourth warning may take place, and it is the dutie of Christians, to seek peace & insue it. If they be iniuries doone vnto our selues, then be pacified and mittigate thy anger, forgiue them for the causes afore-sayd. If they cōcerne the honour of God, then may vvee

be

bee more feruent, and yet let our zeale be tempered with wisedom. As in the case of blasphemy, heresie, and Atheisme, which we ought to redresse to the vtmost of our power, and such stubborne people whom we cannot amend, wee ought to leaue to the iudgement of God. 2. Tim. 4. 14. The godly often times hurt and giue offence, & among them also are dissentions. These matters fall out among them that are more perfect then others, and therefore the scripture doth so manifestly set down, the faults and offences of the godly. The reprobate & euill disposed, after twice or thrice warning, are to be left vnto themselues, and to GOD, but those that haue any sparke of grace, cannot be too often warned.

This vnmercifull seruaunt should haue remembred, what power his Maister had ouer him, when hee kneeled downe vnto him, asking forgiuenes in a case very desperate and past hope. His maisters bountifulnes, and his owne vnworthines should haue drawne him to mercy and compassion. But behold, all these matters vvere out of his minde, the deuill had so fraught him, and possessed him with cruelty, and entred into him, as he entred into Iudas.

Whose

whose vnmercifull dealing, doth shew it selfe in these circumstances: First, assoone as he had departed from his Maister, that had dealt so graciously with him, and meeting with one of his fellowes, euen by and by, without any deliberation, sheweth the fruite of his crueltie. Secondly, he is cruell not toward a stranger, which also is vnlawfull, but toward his owne fellow seruaunt. Thirdly, for a small summe, far lesse then he himselfe was indebted, and yet was forgiuen; for what is a thousand talents to a hundred pence. Where by talents are signified our greeuous and hainous offences, and by the pence, easier transgressions and smaller faults. His fellowe seruaunt kneeleth downe, yet doth he shew no compassion.

His fellowe seruaunts seeing this vncharitable and cruell behauiour, are greeued in hart, for the godly haue a fellow-feeling of the miseries of others, though the fashion of the world be to passe by, & full little to regard them. The godly are not only greeued, but when they cannot helpe, make theyr complaint vnto God, in humble and hartie prayer, for redresse & amendment. The rich and vnmercifull of the worlde,

reuile, wrong and beare; and what iniurie is it, that they will not put in practise, hauing no heauenly cōsideration. Christ his bitter death for them, and the heauy anguishes and distresses of his soule, are not regarded. Ioh. 11. 13. Heb. 4. 15. Rom. 5. 8. & 8. 32. No such matters doe enter into theyr minde. VVell, the poore cryeth & committeth his cause to God, and GOD will haue a time to consider it, psalme. 10. For God beeing mooued with the prayers of the godlie, who are greeued to see such crueltie, and beeing highly offended with the great ingratitude of worldlie men, dooth for these great disorders punish the world with diuers miseries & calamities.

3. And now the third matter commeth to be handled, which containeth the punishment of this ingratitude and cruell behauiour.

Then his Maister called him, and sayd to him, O euill seruaunt, I forgaue thee all the debt, &c.] This great cruelty cannot goe vnpunished, though it be tollerated for a time. And as God is the god of wisdome, so hee handleth his matters most wisely, hee dooth not rashly punish him, but

but first reproueth him, and debateth the cause with him. So dooth God by his Ministers and messengers, reprooue vs, before he doth punish vs.

Oughtest thou not. &c.] Christ requireth of vs thankfulnes, for his benefits bestowed, and for the forgiuenes of our manifold offences, that wee should not be rigorous vnto our brethren, and vnto our neighbours, but that wee should be ready, and easie to forgiue.

So his Maister was wroth.] This sheweth the infinite anger of God against sin, especially against those sinners which are hard harted towards others, and are rather desirous of reuenge, then inclined to mercie and forgiuenes.

And deliuered him to the Iaylers.] which is spoken concerning the doleful prison of euerlasting damnation. For although god do offer mercy vnto all, yet this cruel minded people are not worthy of it, vvho will yeeld no fauour nor pardon. Which saying agreeth with that of Saint Iames chap. 2. 13. There shall be iudgement vvithout mercy to him that wil shew no mercy. The same punishment is appoynted to them, which will not bee reconciled to other in

this life. Math. 5. 26. Thou shalt not come thence till thou hast paide the vtmost farthing. Wher-hence the aduersaries of true religion, gather theyr fained doctrine of purgatorie. He was deliuered (say they) to the Iaylor, vntill he payd, which was some time or other, though it were long first. Though not in this world, nor in hell, yet in purgatorie. But this place dooth ouerthrow theyr purgatory. For certaine it is that Christ meaneth heere eternall damnation, & no temporall punishment, whereby we may satisfie Gods iudgement. And beeing once cōdemned to these eternall punishments, there is no release.

Purgatory.

The Iaylors & tormenters, are his conscience condemning his sin, the terrible accusations of the deuill, outward punishments and miseries, warre, pestilence, and famine, and a thousand such dangers, and not onely the punishments of this life, but of that also which is to come. He is deliuered to the Iaylour, without any hope of release, his punishment is so much the more grieuous, because there is no hope of redemption. He is deliuered to the Iaylour, not to be kept, but to be tormented. To the Iaylour, that is, to Gods eternall iudgment

ment

ment and punishment; so grieuous are the punishments and paines, that are appointed to them that will not forgiue. So that if men & women cannot be drawn to mercifull dealing, by Gods commaundement, and for his loue, and for his sake, at leastwise for theyr own safetie, yet let thē haue especiall care there-vnto, for the terrible & most eternall torments, which are reserued for vnmercifull people; Gods plagues in this worlde, and his punishments in another.

The debt of thy manifold offences still remaineth, & vnlesse thou forgiue others, thy grieuous punishment also remaineth. The debt of our manifolde sinnes still remaineth, and therefore wee had neede of continuall forgiuenes, during our life. But doth this forgiuenes of our neighbour, and of one another, deserue forgiuenes at gods hande? No in no wise; but rather it is a signe & testimonie vnto vs, assuring vs of Gods mercy & forgiuenes, rather of gods free gift and grace and goodnes, then of our desert any way forth.

Till hee shoulde pay all that was due to him.] Which is a thing vnpossible. For as the party against whom we haue offended

is infinite, so is our sinne, as the offence against the Prince, is more then against a priuate person. For if wee be not able to aunswere one for an hundred, howe shall a thousand talents be payd, much lesse tenne thousand, by him that hath not a hundred pence to satisfie. But if hee were cast into prison, vntill the time that hee might pay, there were some likelie-hoode, that that tyme might come, wherein hee might satisfie; and so there might be forgiuenesse of our sinnes, if not in thys life, yet in another.

Howbeit this word *vntill*, doth not heere signifie as wee may suppose, any limitation of time, but rather a time without time, vvhich neuer shalbe ended. For the paines and torments of the wicked, shal be endlesse. Againe, by man, Gods iustice can neuer be satisfied.

But it seemeth too hard and extreame punishment, that temporall offences should be punished with eternal torments. Adams eating of the fruite forbidden, did seeme a light offence, but it was not so in Gods sight. For the offence is not so much to bee considered, as the partie against whom wee doe offend: and seeing it is a-

gainst

gainst God; it deserueth euerlasting punishment, euen damnation it selfe.

So likewise shall my heauenly Father do vnto you, except ye forgiue from your harts, each one to his Brother, theyr trespasses.]

Fourthly, the vp-shot of this Parable and matter, especially to be considered, is set downe in the conclusion, which deliuereth vnto vs, the true vse, and application of this doctrine. 4

Our forgiuenesse ought to be voluntarie, not forced or constrained: VVee are fellow-seruaunts vnder one Lord & Maister, and therefore wee ought freendly and brotherlie to beare with the weakenes and infirmities one of another. Nay the Angels themselues are witnesses in these actions, which before the Lorde doe accuse our negligence and backwardnes, in this matter so waighty; they see it, they are sorry, & they make complaint, & that before such a righteous Iudge, which wil giue eare & iudge vprightly, before whō there is no respect of persons. Neither will he be wrested, either by fauour, feare, or reward, nor carried away with any such worldly considerations, whatsoeuer.

Al-

Although we seeme often-times to forgiue iniuries, yet scarcely do we do it from the hart, so that we receaue them into former fauour againe, and bee as willing to doe them good as euer we haue beene. For most commonly there remaineth in our mindes, a hard remembrance of iniuries passed. But God is truth, & cannot abide deceit or dissembling, and therefore, if we doe not vtterly put out of our minds these wrongs committed against vs, it is not for vs to hope for fauour and forgiuenesse of our offences. According to that Christ hath taught vs to pray, Forgiue vs our trespasses, as we forgiue them that trespasse against vs. For vnlesse euery man forgiue his brother, and that with all his hart, lighter offences doone against him, our heauenly Father will not forgiue vs, the greater trespasses doone against him; but also will reuoke and call back those which hee had forgiuen.

If then God our heauenly Father, doe forgiue vs many & greeuous offences, let vs forgiue one other theyr offences, seeing we pray daily. Forgiue vs our trespasses, as we forgiue thẽ that trespasse against vs. Such measure as we mete to other, shall

God mete to vs, and our wrathfull and reuenging mindes, will be plague with eternall torments. Now hearing these matters, wee must not onely in countenaunce and shew forgiue, but frõ the hart, not fainedly & in hypocrisie, as the law doth require perfect obedience, not only out-ward, but inward also. Ye shal not keepe hatred close in your harts, which vpon euery light occasion, you may put in practise, but bridle your nature, forgiue offences, remember gods commaundement, and be not forgetfull how many offences hee hath forgiuen thee, & what he hath done for thee. Thou wilt doe much for a friend, do more for God. Nourish peace, concord, & vnitie, vse and seeke all meanes to preserue the same. Whereby our priuate estate and the common commoditie of all is maintained, which thing is most acceptable, and commendable before God and godly men.

We must remember first, who it is that is meant by the Creditor. Secondly, when the Creditor demaunds the debt. Thirdly, how great the summe is. Fourthly, what is to be doone in this case, concerning our selues beeing debters, as also concerning them that haue offended vs.

The

The Creditor is GOD the heauenlie King, who hath lent vs many good things, righteousnes, holines, and many other heauenly gifts & graces, and also hath made vs stewards of many other his blessings, which vvee ought to dispose to his glorie, the good of his Church, the benefite one of another, and to our owne comfort and contentment. But we haue beene so farre from satisfying the debt required at our hands, that by our abusing of Gods gyfts and blessings, vvee diuers vvaies increase the debt, vvhich grovveth to so great a sum, that no man is able to pay the same, though he should sell himselfe, and all that hee hath.

Secondly, although GOD doe continually put vs in minde of this debt, yet hee is to be thought then chiefely to call for a reckoning, first as often as our conscience chargeth vs with sinne, and as it were citeth vs to the iudgement seate of GOD. Secondly, when the holy Ghost commeth in the ministerie of the Lavve, and by the threatning thereof, reprooueth sinne, and summoneth vs vnto punishment. Againe, vvhen the signes of Gods wrath are seene, either in heauen or in earth, by his secrete

iudgements, and open punishments vpon offenders that are notorious. 1. Tim. chap. 5. verse 24. And more-ouer, when we are vexed with crosses, or sicknes, or the like, which are as it were Gods messengers and sargants, to call vpon vs for the payment of the debt.

But why are sinnes called debts? Because that as ordinarie debts, doe binde men to payment, so doe our sinnes binde vs to the satisfaction of such an infinite penaltie.

Thirdlie, the debt amounting to tenne thousand talents, is farre beyond our power: VVhether vvee meane the number of our iniquities, vvhich are more then the hayres of our head; or whether we meane the fulfilling of the Lavve of the Lorde, vvhich we can in no manner of wise come neere vnto the satisfaction and full obedience thereof.

Fourthlie, vvhat is to be doone in thys case, concerning our selues? Wee must followe the example of this Debter, which falleth down before his creditor, humbling himselfe, and desiring releasement, which hee obtayneth. So must we acknowledge the greatnes of our sinnes, & be sorry from

our

our hart, that wee are runne into so great debt, and vpon trust of Christs deserts, we must flie vnto our heauenly Father, desiring forgiuenesse and releasement of the debt. Which thing if we doe faithfully & earnestly, we haue a promise that hee will forgiue vs the whole debt, and receaue vs into fauour. Although the releasement of the debt be vtterly free in respect of our selues, yet if wee looke vpon Christ, who for our sinnes suffered dreadfull punishment, there is made satisfaction to god for our debt. Secondly, beside this sufficient payment, it ouerthroweth mans merits, & quencheth the fire of purgatory; for if the debt be released, why is the debter punished? Lastly, it openeth to wretched sinners, the gate of heauenly grace & spiritual comfort, especially in the conflict of death & despaire. And so much the more is our distresse eased, when wee thinke vpon the raunsome, which is the precious death of Christ, who became a sacrifice for our sinnes, to appease Gods wrath, to satisfie the punishment due to our sinnes, and to bring vs againe into fauour; by which meanes our miserie is relieued, and sinne abolished.

How

How doe we come to the possession of this so great mercy? No otherwise but by true repentance. Howe must wee behaue our selues for the great benefit of this our redemption? In all our whole life we must think vpon continual thankfulnes, that we may glorifie God for his so great mercie, with hart, mouth, profession, and behauiour. And most heedfull must wee be, in framing our whole life, that wee loose not so great a benefit through our owne fault, as this vnmercifull debter did.

What the faulte of the vnmercifull seruaunt was, it is to apparant, and very reason and common sence doth condemne it, yet thereby is shewed the most bad nature of the common sort, which is most eager vpon reuenge, and farre from mercy. But if they woulde behold the example of the prophet Elisha, 2.Kings 6. and daily consider it, they woulde bee a great deale the sooner inclined to mercy, who when hee might haue fully reuenged himselfe, hee caused bread and water to bee set before them that sought his life. And surely an enemy shall sooner be wonne vnto thee by benefites, then by reuenge. Elisha his enemies, neuer returned into the Lande of

Israell

Israell againe. Alexander the great, hearing two of his most trustie friends to be at bate and dissention, did not onely rebuke them, but tooke a solemne oath, that when they fell out againe, hee would kill them both, or him that was the cause, so that euer after they liued peaceably. In like case if wee shoulde duly consider the heauie doome, & iudgement which was layd vpon this vnmercifull seruaunt, eyther wee would easily forgiue, or not be hastie to reuenge, but making a pause, wee would be well aduised. But leauing the vnmercifull seruaunt to his Maister, let vs for our better instruction, see what is needfull for vs to doe toward them that haue offended vs.

VVherein wee must vnderstand, that there are two kinds of men that offend vs. Some, assoone as they perceiue themselues to haue offended, doe by and by in humble wise desire forgiuenes. But as concerning him that is stubborne and wilfull, let vs lay aside all desire of reuenge, and cease not to loue him stil, but rather requite him with a good turne insteede of an iniurie, although in the meane time, thou hast a watchfull eye vnto him. For when as God

willeth to wiſh well to our enemies, hee doth not foorth-with require, that wee ſhould like well of thoſe things that hee himſelfe condemneth; but his meaning is onely, that our mindes ſhoulde be cleere from mallice. More-ouer, there are priuate offences betwixt man and man, and publique offences by naughtie behauiour, both which vpon amendement, muſt charitably be forgiuen, as wee would looke to be forgiuen at Gods handes.

Soli Deo omnis laus, ſit gloria, et gratia.

The Parable of the faithfull Seruaunt.

MATH. 24. 45.

Who then is a faithfull seruant and wise, whom his Maister hath made Ruler ouer his houshold. &c.

OF all vnmercifull seruaunts, the carelesse & negligent Minister, is most vnmercifull, who suffereth the soules of them that are committed to his charge, to perrish for want of spirituall foode, beeing heerein also very vnmercifull vnto them-selues, because the blood of them that perrish, shall be required at theyr hands. Ezech. 3. 18. Who as theyr calling and dutie is very honourable, beeing the seruaunts of the most High, so their charge is very waighty. For next vnto the Prince and Magistrate to rule, the Ministers haue the chiefest & waightiest charge imposed vpon them. And as the rich and wealthy, ought to prouide for the releefe of them that stand in neede of theyr helpe, so farre foorth as they may, so must

must the Minister haue care to deliuer the heauenly foode of the soule, to lett passe no occasion, but of those that are commit-ted to his charge, to instruct the ignorant, to comfort the distressed & weake minde, to threaten the obstinate, to confute the heretique, & generally to bring the sheepe into the true sheepfold. Such a one may be cōpared vnto a steward, that can bring forth of his treasure things both new and old: Math. 13. 52. and can apply himselfe vnto the performance of his dutie, as occa-sion serueth. And that this parable is prin-cipally meant of the Ministers, the wordes of the Apostle S. Peter declare, Luke. 12. 41. Who asked of our Sauior Christ whe-ther hee tolde that parable onely to them. Of which sort and degree of men, because there are more that are negligent & care-lesse, then painfull and diligent, therefore the qualities of both are heere set downe, and also what reward each of them shall looke for.

Because godly & painfull Ministers be very rare to be founde, therefore the holie Ghost maketh it a question of wonder; VVho then is a faithfull seruaunt? No doubt there be many thus disposed, but

in respect of the multitude, that are contrarily affected, they be but very fewe, and as one among a hundred, and hee that runneth may easily tel the number. The faithfull seruaunt beeing mindfull of his Maisters comming, is watchfull; and setteth himselfe to performe his busines, with care & conscience. And if the number of them be but small, good Lorde daily increase them, and thrust forth such labourers into thy vinyard, and into thy haruest. Math. 9. 37. 38.

The cause that godly Ministers, are watchfull, painfull, and faithfull is, that they looke for theyr Maisters comming, approuing themselues to GOD, in al vprightnes and good conscience, Acts, 20. Heb. 13. 1. Sam. 12. referring all theyr iniuries to God. 1. Cor. 4. 3. 9. to 14. & 15. 19. Who in his good time will send them comfort. Wisd. 5.

1. Faithfull. A good Minister hath his commendation from these two qualities. First, that hee is faithfull, and secondly, that he ordereth his affayres with great wisedome. And such a one is hee, whom his Maister chuseth to be Ruler ouer his houshold; Such also that are destitute of these qualities, do rather

rather intrude themselues, then that they are chosen. This ground the Apostle S. Paule layeth vnto the Ministers, that they should work vpon. 1. Cor. 4. 1. Let a man so thinke of vs, saith he, as of the Ministers of Christ, and disposers of the secrets of God. And as for the rest, it is required of the disposers, that euery man bee founde faithfull. The faythfull behauiour of a Minister, is the painfull discharge of his duty in his place & calling. Of whom the Apostle speaketh writing vnto Timothie. 1. Epist. 5. 17. The Elders that rule well, are woorthy of double honour, specially they which labour in the worde and doctrine. And how waightie this matter is in a Minister, to be found faithfull, our Sauiour Christ declareth, when he was nowe ready to take his leaue of his disciples, in that earnestly hee exhorteth Peter of all louers, to feede his sheepe, and that hee shoulde not forget it, hee putteth him in minde thereof three times together. Iohn. 21. 15. Those things which we haue most care of, and are most desirous to haue fulfilled, wee keepe to the latter ende of our speach, as our last farewell. And as Peter had his charge, so likewise hauing suffici-

ent tryall howe waighty and necessarie a matter it was to teach and feede the people, therefore in a manner at his last farewell, he putteth the Elders in minde of the selfe-same thing, in the last chapter of the first Epistle. The Elders also that are among you, I beseech, and earnestlie intreate, which am also an Elder, and a witnesse of the sufferings of Christ, and also a pertaker of the glory that shal be reuealed, feede the flocke of God, which dependeth vpon you. Caring for it, not by constraint, but willinglie; not for filthy lucre, but of a readie minde. Not as though yee were Lordes ouer Gods heritage; but that ye may be ensamples to the flocke. And because the nature of man is to doe the cheerefully and with a courage, whereof insueth eyther commendation or reward, therefore the Apostle leaueth nothing out, that may incourage them to so necessary a worke; adding to his exhortation this promise, of vnspeakable rewarde. And when the chiefe Shepheard shall appeare, sayth he, ye shal receiue an incorruptible crowne of glory.

The Apostle Saint Paule, one of the most faithful seruaunts that euer laboured

in Gods seruice, taking his leaue of the Ephesians, Acts. 20. 28. giueth thys last sperial note of remembrance. Take heede therefore vnto your selues and to all the flocke, whereof the holy Ghost hath made you ouer-seers, to feede the Church of God, which he hath purchased vvith his owne blood. And there-withall sheweth the cause of his earnest exhortation, in the two verses following, that after his departure, greeuous Wolues should enter in among them, not sparing the flocke. And moreouer, that of themselues men should arise, speaking peruerse thinges, to dravve disciples after them. Therefore, if they would shew themselues faithfull seruants, they must watch, and looke to these matters: putting them in minde by his ovvne example, I ceased not (sayth he) to vvarne euery one both day and night with teares. That hee might well say, 1. Cor. 11. 1. Be ye followers of me, euen as I am of Christ. Whose painfull labour how great it vvas, not onely appeareth by his Epistles which he wrote, but also by his owne testimony, without boasting or faining. 1. Cor. 15. 10. By the grace of God I am that I am, and his grace which is in me, was not in vaine.

But I laboured more aboundantly then they all, yet not I, but the grace of GOD which is with me. 1. Tim. 1. 12. Therefore I thank him which hath made me ſtrong, which is Chriſt Ieſus our Lorde, for hee counted mee faythfull, and put mee in his ſeruice. And how faythfull he was, and all Miniſters ought to be, he expreſſeth by a fit ſimilitude. 1. Cor. 3. 9. For we together are Gods labourers, ye are Gods husbandry, and gods building.

And as hee himſelfe according to the grace of GOD giuen him, was a skilfull maiſter builder, ſo ought we to be diligent and painfull, & neuer to leaue till we haue brought the building from the foundation to the very roofe. And as husbandmen ceaſe not from theyr labour in tilling the earth, by fallowing, and dunging, and ſtirring, and ſowing, till they haue prepared the Land to bring forth fruite, & then commit the reſt to Gods good will to giue them happy increaſe, and a plentifull harueſt: So ought the Miniſters vvhich are the husbandmen of the grounde of mans hart, to ſhew themſelues as diligent in rooting out ſin, in ſpeaking againſt it, & denouncing the threatnings of God, as alſo

in admonishing them: for as the other was the tearing vp, so this is the dunging of the ground. They must neuer leaue of instructing and perswading and doing theyr best, by sowing the seede of Gods word: & so as men that can goe no further, they commit the prosperous successe of theyr labours vnto gods wisedome, who seeth what is most fit and conuenient. For neyther is he that planteth any thing, neyther hee that watreth, but God that giueth the increase. And although we cannot satisfie our selues, in the performance of our dutie, and that acknowledging our manifold wants and great insufficiencie (as indeede who is sufficient for these things) and that in consideration we begin to faynt and to be discouraged, yet let vs remember that comfort, which we read, 2.Cor.8.12. That if there be first a willing minde, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that hee hath not. Let vs also consider, that God hath not giuen his graces alike to euery one, and that he that findeth in himselfe any sufficiency at all, hath a talent to imploy, and that hee must be carefull, faithfull, and painfull. Nowe he is not counted a faithfull seruaunt which

onely teacheth, but he which (with all care, diligence, and forwardnes) seeketh to the vtmost of his power, to promote the glory of God, the edifying of the Church, and the saluation of mens soules. And what it is to be painfull and faythfull in this busines, the Apostle sheweth, 2. Tim. 4. 1. I charge thee (sayth hee to Timothy) before God, and before the Lorde Iesus Christ, which shall iudge the quicke and dead at his appearing & in his kingdome, preach the Word, be instant in season, and out of season, improue, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffring, and doctrine.

You see howe straight a charge the Minister hath to be painfull; and least hee should alleage excuses for his negligence, it is shewed howe and wherein he should bestowe his paines. They that haue the greatest giftes, haue the greatest abilitie; & yet I know not how it commeth to passe, but it falleth out most often, that they become least painfull; vnlesse the deuill, to stop the course of the gospell, to take away the foode of the soule, and to keepe the people still in blindnes and ignorance, doth bewitch such Pastours, with too much desire of wealth, promotion, plea-

sure,

sure,] and such like vanities. So their gyfts are wrapped vp in a napkin, and digged vnder the earth, altogether forgetting them-selues, that the ampler the gyfts are, the more shall be required at theyr hands. Luc. 12.48. But many thinke they haue well discharged themselues, if they preach now and then in theyr Benefices, & so become for the most part of the yeere, Non resi-dents. Yet they doe farre better, which leaue in theyr stedde a godly, learned, and diligent Pastour, allowing him sufficient maintenaunce, to incourage him therein; for God regardeth a cheerefull and not a niggardly giuer.

7. If wealth and estimation be the vtmost scope of theyr desires, if they haue eyes to see, or harts to consider, the greatest welth and promotion is, not in this world, but in another. God said to Abraham, I am thy exceeding great reward: and the Leuites had no part among their brethren, because God was theyr portion. If they looke for these things in this world, they haue theyr reward. Math. 6.5. But how? Of men, but not of God. Rom. 2.29. What is it to shake a little foddering among the sheepe now and then, how can they prosper vpon such

slender feeding. 1. If the chyldren of Israel had not had Manna from heauen euerie day, they had perished for want of foode. You that haue great gyfts, & for the most part a number of people committed to your charge, in two or three places, more or lesse, consider what I say, and God put it into your harts, to haue due care thereof, as is requisite, and shall hereafter no doubt be required at your hands, when you shall be called to your account; which tyme you your selues know, you cannot escape. And these words, To whomsoeuer much is giuen, of him shal be much required, are annexed to the punishment of the slothfull and negligent seruaunt. Luke. 12.47. That seruaunt that knew his Maisters will, and prepared not himselfe, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 1. Tim. 4. 16. Take heed vnto thy selfe and vnto learning, continue therein. For in dooing this, thou shalt both saue thy selfe, & them that heare thee. But if thou be negligent therin, assure thy selfe that in so dooing, thou runnest into greater danger, then thou art well aware of. And that the rather, because a number do perish for want of foode, that are com-

mitted to thy charge. For where there is no preaching, there the people perish.

Faithfull in deliuering Gods truth, without errour.

Hee shall shewe himselfe a faithfull seruant not onely in the painful performance of his dutie, but also when he hath an especiall care with all warines and circumspection to deliuer the truth of God in all sinceritie, without any blot of heresie, or mingling mans deuices there-with. What is chaffe in comparison of wheat, or drosse in respect of gold? what is darknesse vnto light? Iere. 23.28. What a foolish worke is it to lay hay or stubble vpon Gods building? and to bring in grosse errours and palpable heresies, through misconstering, and misinterpreting of Gods word, after our owne foolish fancies. Nay if we bring gold and siluer, and precious stones, that is to say, the finest deuices of man, as are works of congruity, and supererrogation, inuocation of Saints, & the like, all comes to nothing. Therefore let euery one that buildeth, take heede how he buildeth. For other foundation can no man lay, the that which is layd, which is Iesus Christ. 1.Cor. 3.11. And as for all other inuentions and traditions of men, they are but fooleries in respect of Gods seruice and true worship.

As our Sauiour Christ in plaine termes pronounceth of thẽ, calling them no better then vanities. Math. 15. 9. In vaine they worshyp me, teaching for doctrines mens precepts. And howe dangerous a thing it is, we may perceiue it in the sonnes of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Leuit. 10. 3. who offring strange fire before the Lord, were deuoured & consumed with fire from the Lorde. Saint Iohn also in his Reuelation, doth testifie the same, chap. 22. 18. I protest vnto euery man (saith he) that heareth the words of the prophecy of this booke, if any man shall ad vnto these things, God shall adde vnto him, the plagues that are written in this booke. And if any man shal diminish of the wordes of the booke of this prophecie, God shall take away his part out of the booke of life, & out of the holy Citty, and from those thinges which are written in this Booke. Therefore let him consider what he taketh in hand. For to deliuer the Word, eyther falsely or corruptly, is a grieuous sin.

Faithfull in reproouing sinne.

But of all other hee may be sayde to be faythfull, who in reproouing of sin, feareth not the face of man. For the prophet Ieremie, a man of great sufficiencie, he fainteth

in

in this busines, chap. 15. 10. VVoe is mee sayth he, my mother, that thou hast borne me a contentious man, and a man that striueth with the whole earth. So weake minded was he, although GOD had charged him, & incouraged him there-vnto, when by Gods commaundement hee first tooke vpon him this busines. Ierem. 1. 16. I will declare vnto them my iudgements, touching all the wickednes of them that haue forsaken me. Thou therfore trusse vp thy loynes and arise, and speake vnto them all that I command thee, be not afrayde of theyr faces, least I destroy thee before thē. For I, behold this day, haue made thee a defenced City, and an yron pillers, and walls of brasse, against the whole Land, against the Kings of Iuda, and against the Princes thereof, and against the people of the Land. For they shall fight against thee, but they shal not preuaile against thee.

In the prophecie of Ezech. chapter 33. God chargeth the prophet to blowe the trumpet, and warne the people. And if any will not be warned, if the sworde come and take him away, his blood shall be vpon his own head, for he heard the sound of the trumpet, and would not be warned

and

and admonished. Sonne of man, I haue made thee a Watch-man, admonish them from me, if thou doost not speak, he shall die in his iniquitie, but his blood will I require at thy hand. But if thou doe warne him, and hee doe not returne, hee shall die for his iniquity, but thou hast deliuered thy soule. The selfe same thing is repeated in the third chapter of the same prophecy, to note vnto vs the necessity of this matter, and how soeuer flesh and bloode doe drawe backe, yet gods commaundement ought to be a spur vnto them, and a prick to theyr sides. Esay, 51. 12. I euen I am he that comfort you. Who art thou that thou shouldest feare a mortal man, & the sonne of man that shall be made as grasse? And forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath spred out the heauens, and layd the foundations of the earth. Our Sauiour Christ knowing before hand, the weaknesse of man, as weake as water, therefore doth prepare and strengthen them to this businesse. Iohn. 16, 1, 2 &c. But especiallie in the gospell of Saint Mathew chapter 10, 28. And feare yee not them which kill the bodie, but are not able to kill the soule, but rather feare him, which is able to destroy

both

both soule and body in hell: yea, I say vnto you, feare him. Reu. 17. 14.

In vvhat great danger then are they, which sow cushions vnder mens elbowes, & dare not reproue them for their sinnes. For as the Wiseman saith, Prou. 26, 28. A flattering mouth causeth ruine, both to them that vse it, and to other that are flattered. See the example of King Ahab, 1. Kings 22. Iere. 23. 31. Behold, I wil come against the prophets (saith the lord) which haue sweet tongues, chap. 6. 14. They haue healed the hurt of the daughter of my people, with sweet wordes, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. chap. 23. 17. They say still vnto them that despise thee, The Lord hath sayd, ye shall haue peace, and they say to euery one that walketh after the stubbornnes of his owne hart, no euill shal come vpon you, chap. 14. 13. to 16. 1. Thes. 5, 3. Prou. 24. 24. He that saith to the wicked thou art righteous, him shal the people curse, and the multitude shall abhor him. But to them that rebuke him, shall be pleasure, and vppon them shall come the blessing of goodnes. Pro. 17, 15. Esay, 5, 23. Therefore the Apostle Saint Paul reioyceth in the testimonie of a good

consci-

conſcience. 1. Theſ. 2. 4. 5. We ſpeake not ſaith he, as they that pleaſe men, but God, which tryeth our harts. neyther did we euer vſe flattering wordes or coloured doutouſnes: God is record. Let him therefore be our example to followe, and let vs take heede of the contrarie: yea, though we loſe our liues with Iohn Baptiſt, for reprouing of Herod, happy ſhal we be. And ſurely the worlde is at this poynt nowe a dayes, that it is counted a fault and a matter worthy of reproofe, yea and of harde dealing (by thoſe which are contrarilie diſpoſed, ſuch as Sathan ſtirreth vp in euerie congregation) to bee zealous and feruent in the Lords cauſe, eſpecially in beating downe ſinne, and reprouing iniquity. Vnto the maintenaunce whereof, are vſed all allurements, occaſions, and excuſes, to harden mens harts, and conſciences therein.

He that ſhall deale calmely and temperately with them, that ſhall neuer threaten and denounce Gods iudgements, plagues and puniſhments for theyr offences; him they reckon a wiſe man, fitteſt to ſpeak, & to be placed among them. But if he touch the quicke, if hee hunger and thirſt the reforma-

forma-

formation of abuses, seeking theyr good & amendement, then by and by he groweth out of fauour, and is subiect to al dangers. Acts 22. 22. Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not meet that he should liue.

How-beit, as in waighty matters, great wisedome is to be vsed, so doubtlesse in this duty of the Minister, Dan. 4, 24. Iere. 26, 13. to 16. And as one saith very well, *Cum reprehensio, omnes mutationes, cædem fugam aliaq; hostilia portendat, tanto maiore utendum sapientia, omnisq; malitiæ et turbatis animi, vel minima suspicio remouenda.* Another also very effectually, *Quanto zelus feruidior, ac vehementior spiritus, profusiorque charitas, eo vigilantiori opus est scientia, quæ zelum supprimat, spiritum temperet, ordinet charitatem.* Let all things be done in loue, in order, in time, in place, with discretion and circumspection, hauing due consideration of the circumstances, which is an especiall poynt of wisedome. Heereof shal I speake more, when I come to intreat of the wisedome of a faithfull seruant.

But the greatest breake-backe to a Minister, in performing his dutie, and especially to keepe him from reproouing, is the

Faithfull in discharging his duty, aboue the care of worldly cōmodities.

ouer-much care of worldly commodities, which are as thornes, and doe so choke vs, that they make vs altogether vnprofitable in our ministery. For if rewards doe blind the eyes of the Wise, & peruert the words of the iust, Deut. 16. 19. shall not the Minister be too much carried away, that hath regard to these thinges. Therefore that which is iust and right follow, & although thou be debarred and abridged of earthly commodities, (as nothing so ready then to take frō the minister) yet make thou more account of Gods blessing, & perswade thy selfe, that a good cōscience is a princes treasure, yea, & more worth then all the world. Shall I make the question? Is there a man that respecteth the discharge of his dutie, more then siluer and gold, he may truly be said to be a faithfull man, and woorthie of great commendation. And no doubt there be many so disposed, though to say the truth, and in comparison, they be but rare and few, which seeke not theyr own profit, but the good and profit of many, that they might be saued. 1, Cor, 10, 33. 2, Tim. 2.4. *Apparent rari, vasto in gurgite nantes.* No man that warreth, intangleth himselfe with the affayres of this life, because hee

would please him, that hath chosen him to bee a souldiour. The Husband-man must not onely labour before hee receaue the fruites, but hee must also waite the time of haruest with all patience, Iames.5. 7. And he that proueth masteries, abstaineth from all things, that he may obtaine a corruptible crowne, but wee for an vncorruptible. 1.Cor,9,25. The Lorde giue euery Minister wisedome in this cause, and that he be not too much doted vppon worldly commodities.

Yet is there another waighty hinderance to keep him from the faithful discharge of his duty, that is when the minister cannot endure scoffs & taunts, contempt and disdaine. Here is the practise of his patience, & the trial of his humility. For hee lightlie whom persecution will not make afrayde, will stoope at this crosse. It is wisedom to redresse iniuries in all godly charitie, but many things must patiently be born, which cannot be amended. Take the Apostles rule for thy direction. 1,Cor, chap,4, verse 12. VVee are reuiled, and yet vvee blesse, vvee are persecuted and suffer it, we are euill spoken of, & we pray. Weeare disdained, made a iesting stocke, and a Table-

Contempt maketh him faint, which would be faithfull.

talk, we are made as the filth of the world, and the of-scouring of all things vnto this time. And shall it still so continue, without redresse, without amendement? Yea, as long as the world endureth: and therfore vpon necessity thou must arme thy selfe with patience, goe forward in thy duty, & treade all such disgraces vnder thy feete. Hebr. 12. 2. Looking vnto Iesus the Authour & finisher of our fayth, who for the ioy that was set before him, endured the Crosse, & despised the shame. If they haue called the Maister Belzebub, what are the seruants to looke for better entertainment, at the hands of this shamelesse world. Ioh. 15, 18. If the world hate you, you knovve that it hated me before you: if yee were of the world, the world would loue his own, but because yee are not of the world, but I haue chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I sayde vnto you, the seruaunt is not greater then his Maister. Let vs not deserue reproches as euill dooers. 1, Pet. 4, 15. but rather let vs behaue our selues blamelesse, without rebuke in the midst of a naughtie and crooked Nation. Phil. 2. 15. That by our good workes, which they shall

shall see, 1,Pet.2,12. they may glorifie god in the day of the visitation, when it shall please God to call them, and to conuert them. Mat,5,11, Blessed are ye when men reuile you, and say all manner of euill against you, for my sake, and for the faythfull discharge of your dutie, and shall doe these things falsely, without any desert of yours. And let this be an Item vnto vs, Luke,6,26. Woe be to you, when all men speake well of you. 1,Cor,15,32. 2,Tim,4, 7. The Apostles fought with beasts at Ephesus, and surely these scoffers be no reasonable creatures, theyr behauiour beeing altogether foolish, & they themselues being such, whō Christ compareth to swine; Cast not pearles before swine. Eze, 33,30, to the end of the chapter. If they will not be amended, yet be not thou discouraged. Commit thy cause to GOD, 1,Pet.4,19, who in his good time, will order all things beyond thy expectation: and leaue such scoffers and scorners to him, which is readie to iudge quick and dead, 1,pet,4,5, to whom they shall giue their accounts. And a time shall fall out, that they shall knowe that a prophet was among them, Eze,33, 33. Wherefore, let vs learne to say with the

Apostle, 1, Cor, 4, 3. I passe very little to iudged of you, or of mans iudgement.

Shake off all discontentments, & let no such matters be any hinderance vnto vs, why we should not shew our selues faithfull to the vtmost of our power. Rom, 8. 18 In all thinges let Ministers haue especiall care, to pray vnto God continually, and to beseech him, that theyr ministerie through the holy Ghost, may be effectuall toward them which are cōmitted to their charge, for whom they shall giue account, & with whom they are put in trust: and that god would blesse his owne ordinance, and let them endeuour what they may, so to apply themselues, that they may be fit instruments, not onely to winne them that be godly disposed, but also to recouer such, which seeme to be desperate & past hope. The Lord giue vs wisedom, to behaue our selues in this case as we ought to doe.

Wisedom also required.

Who then is a faithful seruant and wise.] The next property in a minister is, that he ioyne to his faithfull care all wisedom. And to this intent, not onely to win the vveake, but also to worke a miracle, vppon those which be obstinate; I could vvish the minister still to set before his eyes, the counsell

sell which the Apostle Saint Paule giueth to Timothy, 2,Tim,2,24. The seruant of the lord must not striue, but must be gentle toward all men, apt to teach, suffering the euill men patiently. Instructing them with meeknesse that are contrary minded, proouing if GOD at any time, vvill giue them repentance, that they may know the truth. And that they may come to amendment, out of the snare of the deuill, which are taken of him at his vvill. Rom, 1, 14. Colos. 1, 28. VVee preach Christ, admonishing euery man, and teaching euerie man in all wisedome, that we may present euery man perfect in Christ Iesus. And as Salomon prayed vnto GOD for vvisedome, aboue all other thinges to gouerne his people well, 1,Kings.3.7,to 11,because hee knew not howe to goe out and in before them, so the learnedst man that is, & that hath most experience, is often to seek in this matter.

2.Cor,12, 16,

Iames 1, 5. And if any lacke wisedome, let him aske it of God, which giueth to all men liberally, and reprocheth no man, & it shall be giuen him. For as wee knovve not what to pray as we ought, Rom,chap. 8,26. but the Spirit maketh request for vs,

so

so we know not how to behaue our selues wisely and discreetly, without the directi-on of the same spirit. Our mindes by na-ture are full of darknes, and he that is gui-ded by his naturall reason and mother-wit, and great learning, doth often-times misse in bringing his matters to passe. In this case let vs obserue all occasions, and watch all opportunities, and applie our selues vnto them, vnto whō we are bound to doe good, seeing we are debters not on-ly to the wise, but also to the vnwise. Rom, 1, 14. And here the Apostle sheweth him selfe an excellent patterne and example, 1, Cor, 9, 19, Though I be free from al men, yet haue I made my selfe seruaunt vnto all men, that I might win the moe. And vn-to the Iewes I become as a Iewe, that I might winne the Iewes: to them that are vnder the law, as though I were vnder the Law, that I might winne them. To them that were without the Lawe, as though I were without the lawe, (when I am not without the law, as pertaining to GOD, but am in the lawe through Christ) that I may win them that are without the lawe. To the weake, I become as weake, that I may win the weake: I am made all things

to

to all men, that I might by all meanes saue some. And howe can this be brought to passe, but with singuler wisedome, wherein although some may be offended, yet it is rather an offence taken then giuen. 1, Cor.10,32, Especially let vs take heede of grosse offences, whereof it is said, It were better a milstone should be hanged about their necks, and they drowned in the Sea, Math.18,6,7. Wherein we ought to haue great care of godlie conuersation, that all be done to edifying. Ephe,5,1,to 5, Let vs frame our selues to grauitie, agreeable to our calling, auoyding foolish iests and vnseemly behauiour, but rather let vs exhort vnto godlines, and admonish vnto vertue, and giue thanks for Gods benefits & blessings, and in all things behaue your selues as it becommeth Saints, saints by calling, & saints by profession & conuersation. And seeing we are as a Candle set vppon a hill, let our light so shine, that they which see our good workes, may glorifie our Father which is in heauen. Math,5,16.

He cannot behaue himselfe wisely in his ministerie, that hath not a feeling of the infirmities of others. For this cause it is testified of Christ, Heb,4,15, We haue not an

Wise in curing spirituall infirmities.

an High-priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all things tempted in like sort, yet without sinne. chap. 2, 18. For in that he suffered and was tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. ver. 10. It became him for whom are all things, & by whom are all things, seeing that he brought many children vnto glory, that he should consecrate the Prince of their saluation through afflictions. It was said to Peter, Luke, 22, 32. When thou art conuerted, strengthen thy brethren. Gala. 6, 1. 2. The Apostle in this behalfe speaketh very wisely, Brethren if a man bee falne by occasion into anie fault, yee which are spirituall, restore such a one, with the spirit of meeknes, cōsidering thy selfe, least thou also be tempted. Beare yee one anothers burden, and so fulfill the law of Christ. A great furtherance heereunto is, when they shew themselues meeke & mild, & gentle to be talked withall, with all familiaritie: without all soure and seuere behauiour. In this quality the Apostle S. Paule did excell, not onely in that he became all things to al men in godly sort, as we haue said before, but also where it is sayd, Acts, 28, 30. that he receiued all that came in

See more heereof, in the first leafe of B. Hoopers history, in the book of Martirs.

in vnto him. And for want of this wisdom, the peoples mindes are oftentimes estranged, who otherwise might be wonne and gained vnto God.

A great difference there is betwixt them that giue the raines to their wicked disposition, and betwixt them, that feeling themselues subiect to mighty sinnes, are sorrie with the Apostle, saying, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliuer mee from thys body of sinne. The godly are often ouertaken with their infirmities, wherein theyr case is to be pittied, and wee must pray for them, and be sorry with them, sometimes in a maner not to take knowledge of their weaknes, sometimes gently to admonish, but bitterly to reprooue them wee ought to forbear, vnlesse the case do grow toward extremities. Looke vppon the estate of S. Paul himselfe, Ro. 7. This weaknes of ours serueth wel to hūble vs, & to make vs more earnestly to call for gods help, this would ease vs from all murmuring and grudging against God, considering our owne vnworthines. Againe, in matters of religion, they that are yet weake & backward, may hereafter be more strong & forward, yea, though some start aside to idolatry, or for-

ſaking true religion, ſo long as there is any hope of amendment, they are not vtterlie to be caſt of. For many through weaknes, rather then obſtinate frowardnes & mallice; haue doone ſo: ſathan is ſtrong in tempting the godly, yet the power of god is made perfect in our weakenes, & God is ſtronger. And a faythfull and wiſe Miniſter, will doe his beſt endeuour, to nouriſh and increaſe the knowledge of God in them that are not ſetled, and hee muſt beare with many theyr wants. For as vvee cannot be perfect in this life, ſo doe wee abound with many imperfections. Mat, 14, 31, When Peter deſerued to be left to him ſelfe, yet Chriſt ſtretched forth his hand & caught him, ſaying; O thou of little fayth, wherefore didſt thou doubt? Whē Chriſt prayed, the Apoſtles ſlept, and when hee was taken, they were all ſcattered & offended, and yet were they not caſt of. Chriſt came to ſaue that was loſt, Math, 18, 11, therefore the Miniſters muſt not cōtemne ſuch, but doe theyr beſt to winne them to God.

Great conſideration muſt bee had, not onely in matters of Religion, but alſo in matters of Diſcipline, that all thinges may

tend

tend by little and little, rather to edification then to destruction. VVee must not heerein please our selues, but haue due regard vnto the circumstances: carrying our selues as the Apostle aduiseth, 1, Thes, 5, 14, admonish them that are vnrulie, comfort the feeble minded, beare vvith the weake, be patient toward all men. By teaching, admonishing, correcting, comforting, apply thy selfe stil to handle thy matters wisely, 1, Cor, 5, We are willed not to company with fornicators, and not altogether with fornicatours, & such like people in the world; for then we must go out of the worlde; but as Christ conuersed among sinners, to call sinners, so must wee doe also, that by our godly conuersation, we may be a meanes to drawe them to repentance and amendement. Often must the Minister frame himselfe, to remedy the infirmities of the weake, and not to vvaxe wearie at any hand. Therefore the Apostle willeth Timothy, 2, Tim, 4, 2. to improue, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering. When Peter asked Christ, whether he should forgiue vntill seauen tymes, hee had this aunswere, that hee should so doe vntill seauenty times seauen times. And

 those

those in whom there is any hope, we are to account of them not as enemies, but as brethren, 2. Thes. 3.15. The ciuill Magistrate punisheth diuers offences with death, but the Minister is alwayes to seek the amendment of the party.

His mind must far differ from the multitude in this respect, who are giuen to despise and condemne, and make a triumph of other mens faults, making them odious vnto al men, which is the next way to driue them to despaire, little considering, that if their faults were written in their owne foreheads, they wold depart one after another, hauing nothing to say to the offenders, as we read of the Scribes and Pharises, Iohn. 8. which set the woman taken in adulterie before Christ, & being reproued by their owne conscience, went forth from the Eldest to the last. A difference there is betwixt open and wilful offenders, & them which eyther through negligence or infirmitie goe astray. The one rise againe and repent, the other are bent to continue in theyr sinne, defending the same, and contemning all good admonitions. Those that sin vpon infirmitie, are to be brought into the way, not reiected & condemned. And this

this we shall performe, not by force, or vpbrayding speeches, or austerity of countenaunce, but by all mildnes and gentlenes, considering the manifold tentations of the deuill, & the pronenes of our corrupt nature and sinfull flesh, beside euill examples, counsell, and company. Rom. 15, 1. Wee which are strong, ought to beare the infirmities of the weake, and not to please our selues. For Christ also woulde not please himselfe. Math. 12. 20. Who would not breake a brused reede, nor quench the smoaking flaxe. Finally, the behauiour of a Minister in this behalfe, must be friendly, familiar, louing, like vnto a father, mother, or nurse, hauing respect to time, place, persons, and as the cause it selfe shall require.

Many not considering the frailtie & infirmitie of man, are too bitter in theyr reproofe and admonition, putting no difference in respect of times, of persons, and places. 1. Tim. 5. 1 2. Who first should seek remedie by all gentle meanes, before bitter reprehensions and heauy threatnings be denounced against any. In threatning also, vvee must keepe that measure, that the boundes of charitie be not broken, so long

Wisdom in reprouing.

long as there is any hope, & to count them that offend not as enemies, 2, Thes, 3, 15. But good God, what hurly burly and vnquietnes, is often-times seene in Church affayres, for want of this wisedome. And as the Magistrate dooth often wincke at some offences, so the Minister must beare vvith some infirmities; and better it is to temporise, then by vntimely remedies, to set mischiefes abroade. Many mens minds which otherwise might be won, are alienated & estranged, through the ouer seuere behauiour of the Ministers: as againe, through theyr negligence and childish lenity, and too milde behauiour, many grow to be too loose, and giue great offence. As occasion serueth, the ministers must shewe themselues either milde & compassionate, or rough and seuere. And he that wil performe his ministery in good sort, as is meet and conuenient, must secretly knowe and inquire the inclinations and dispositions, the manners and customes of those, ouer whom hee is set. And furthermore, hee ought earnestly and continually to pray vnto God, that hee woulde grant him the spirit of wisedome & vnderstanding, that hee woulde giue him fauour among his people,

Extat preclara diui. Barnardi homilia hac de re.

people,and incline their harts toward him, and that he would make his admonitions toward them effectuall, and that he would giue good successe to his labours. The most part doe offende greeuously in the maner & circumstances of reprehending, either for such matters which they doe not well consider and looke into, or they doe it vnceasonably, in respect of time and place, and company, or without all reuerence of their persons and callings, and for themselues most vncharitably, & far from the rule of Christianity. For the amendment of others, and peace and quietnes ought to be the scope of reprehensions. Let al things be done honestly & in order, to edification,& not to destruction. Gods dishonour must rather moue him,then his owne priuate wrongs, neyther must his publique ministery be troubled by such distemperature,let nothing fall from them vnaduisedly,or that may tast of their owne discontentments. Hauing alwaies regard to Gods cause, first we must conuince thẽ of their sinne, and then exhort to repentance. Many cry repent and amend, and thunder out the judgements of God, this in deede ought to be done; but if we doe

not first shew them, what is amisse, it will not be effectuall. For then wil Dauid confesse his sinne, when Nathan shall lay the parable close to his conscience. 2.Sa.12.13. Then is Nabal stroken as dumb as a stone, when Abigael shall wisely watch her time, and tell him of his churlishnes. 1.Sam.25.36.37. There is a time for all things, & he is wise that knowes opportunity, and the Minister must sometime waite his time. Ecclus, 31.31. and 6.7.26. and 21.25.26. 2. Tim. 2.24. Then will the Samaritane woman leaue her scoffing, when Christ shall come home to her conscience. Iohn, 4.18. And then let the Preacher looke to profit by his publique doctrine, and the brother by his priuate counsaile, when first they shall prooue to their consciences, that of this or that sinne they are guilty. Yet this withall they must remember, that with the heate of their reprehensions, they ioyne consolation and comfort, especially to them that are to be comforted. As the prophets in their prophecies, giue euident example. 2,Sam.12.13. Da.4.24. Heb.6.9. 2 Cor.7.8.9.& 2.7.

It is lawfull and necessary for the Minister of God, somtime to vse sharpe words, if

if he meaneth to doe any good, especiallie when hee hath to deale with men, whose faces are of brasse, and therefore cannot blush, whose necks are of iron, & therfore will not bowe, whose harts are of flint, and therfore are not easily softned, whose consciences are euen as it were seared vp with a hot iron. Howbeit, the Minister of God is not alwaies to lay on load, as some vndiscreetly fill their sermons with inuectiues & exclamations, whereas a litle wisely spoken and in time, in godly and christian zeale, shall more preuaile, then all such hot inflamations. Somtimes therfore with Paul he is to doubt whether he should come with a rod, or with the spirit of meekenes and mildnes. And as he shal perceiue thē either more obstinate or tractable, so to make the edge of his reprehension blunt or sharp, as he seeth his Still to drop, so to quicken or slake his fire, and so to straine or let downe the string, as that neyther by too much straining, or too much loocing, that string be brought more out of tune then it was at the first, and so be still left out of tune. Againe, he is not to handle all a like, but to remember, that all the strings of an instrument are not a like placed, a like natured,

 a like

a like founded, not all tuned and ſtrained a like, nor all out of tune at once, nor all out of tune a like, and that according to their place, greatnes, or ſmalenes, nature, quantity, & quality, euery one muſt more or leſſe be ſtrained. And euen ſo it is among men; the Magiſtrate muſt be reproued, but with great reuerence and ſinguler modeſty; the elder ſort muſt be reproued, but as fathers, the younger ſort, but as children, and euery one according to his place and calling muſt be dealt with all. 1, Tim. 5, 1, 2.

Againe, if hee ſhall perceaue two to be fallen downe into one and the ſelfe ſame ſin, he is wiſely to obſerue, how they came downe, and warily to put a difference betweene the one and the other. For the one may fall by weakenes, the other of wilfulnes, the one of ignorance, the other of malice; the one therfore with lenity, the other with ſeuerity muſt be proceeded againſt. And alwaies he muſt temper his ſpeeches, according to the nature & diſpoſition of the perſons, with whom he hath to deale; and according to the quality & quantitie of the ſinne againſt which he dealeth. Examples heereof we haue not a fewe in the

ſcrip-

scriptures. Christ will not breake the brused reede, nor quench the smoaking flaxe. Math.12,20. Esay,42,3, but the rebels wil he batter in peeces, like a potters vessell. Psal.2,9. Moses was the meekest man vppon the earth, yet none more angry with Aaron then hee, nor more seuere against idolaters then he. Paul will perswade Agrippa, to become a christian, and wil conuay himselfe into the bowels of the Galathians, to win them vnto Christ, but hee meaneth to take vp Peter for halting, and to pronounce Elymas the very childe of the deuill.

Neuerthelesse, to be reproued iustly and soundly out of Gods word, and according to their desert, hath not a like effect in all. As may be seene both in the stubborne behauiour of Ieroboam, in the old Testament, & of the malicious & wicked Iewes, when Stephen the martir laid their faults before their eyes, Acts,7,54. For heereby they were made the worse, their harts burst for anger, they gnashed at him with their teeth, they stopped their eares, and ran vppon him all at once. Neuerthelesse whatsoeuer happen, the wicked must stoutly be resisted, neither is their force to be fea-

red, howsoeuer the feare of danger make many to draw back. But if our labour take not effect, according to our wish & desire, let vs vnderstand, that this christian fortitude, is a sweet smelling sauour vnto God. The nature of the wicked dooth heerein liuely shewe it selfe, in that they become worse and more stubborne. For as doggs being cast in the water, or tied by the neck or legs barke & bite at them which stretch out their handes to helpe them, for they thinke they come to doe them more hurt: So they that are bound with the chaines of wickednes, cannot take in good part the godly endeuours, of them which would set them free, but take all in the euill part, and interpret all to the worst, taking them to be their chiefest enemies, and after the fashion of doggs, they turne back againe, and bark, and bite, and teare.

Godly & christian seuerity, is both profitable & praise-worthy, most agreeable to the nature of medicine and phisick. Some must be so gently vsed, that neuerthelesse we doe our best, to amend their faults, first by priuate admonition, & causing other to ioyne with vs, in the same busines: but if that will not serue, to vse open reprehensi-

on,

on, and if that preuaile not, to commit the matter to the censures of the church, to leaue thē to Gods iudgment, either in mercy to be conuerted, or in iustice to be confounded, and so to auoid them, as those in whom there is little hope of amendment.

Our admonitions & reprehensions, must be tempered with wise moderation, least if they be too hard, strait, & too seuere, som be vtterly cast down & ouerthrowne. For there are that yeeld themselues so humbly vnto the worde preached, that when anie thing is denounced, their hart melteth, and their flesh trembleth. And though it be not applied by the preacher, yet they apply it very strictly vnto themselues. And if any fault wherof they are guilty be amplified, or a comfort not presently ministred, they are in the horrors of death, & brought almost to desperation. Now because these are the best people, and neerest vnto the kingdome of God. Psal.51.17. Esay,61.2. and 66.2. Math.11,28. therefore the more wisedome must be vsed. For as in a purgation is some poyson, but great preseruatiues mixed there-with-all, so reproofes giuen to tender consciences, and trembling harts, must haue consolations to comfort, and

and raise them vp againe. For if by the subtilty of sathan, they be preuented with a fault; as who is free from falling, we must not aggreuate or amplifie the same, but follow that rule which the holy ghost teacheth. Gal. 6,1. Brethren, if a man be fallen by occasion into any fault, ye which are spirituall, restore such a one by the spirit of meekenes, considering thy selfe least thou also be tempted. Wee which are strong, ought to beare the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selues. Ro. 15,1. For if it be Dauid or Ezekias, that hath sinned, doe but tell them of it, & they wil confesse it, and be woe at the hart for it, thou needst not to dwell much vpon it. And if it be Peter that hath done amisse, let Christ but looke back vpō him, he will goe out forthwith and weepe bitterly. Therefore such tender consciences must choisely be dealt withall, least they be swallowed vp of ouer-much sorrow. 2. Cor. 2,7. Againe, many being despised or little set by, in their godly griefe, either growe to despaire, or giue themselues to enioy the pleasures of the worlde, as though they had no part in God, for the deuill will soone & most easily offer them occasion, vtterly to fall away,

there-

therefore great heede must be taken about such, and the Minister must be carefull, wise, and diligent, to comfort such, and to instruct them. For as too much lenity hath vndone many, so too much seuerity hath also wrought ouerthrowes. But by hovv many wayes conuersion is to be attempted and sought, see *Turnbull* vpon Iames, pag. 341, vpō these words, being the last of the Epistle. Let him know, that he which hath conuerted a sinner, from going astray, &c.

Great care must be had of admonitions, that they be not captious or curious, finding fault where there is little cause; neither must they be done in bitternes and reproach, for that were to destroy and not to saue our brethren, but they must be done carefully, with prayer going before, that our admonitions may preuaile. Wherefore in this case, let our speeches be seasoned with trueth, grauity, loue, and grace. And truly then is there hope of dooing good, when men shall see, that we doe not reproue them of malice, or to make them odious, or to get our selues a name, or for some other sinister respect, but of conscience and of loue, seeking thereby the good and amendment of their brethren, & that

we

we are no whit glad of their faults, but rather greeued at their falls. Our reproofes must proceede from a hatred of sinne, and a conscience, and care to amend our brethren, and not of a stomack to reuenge, or vtterly to disgrace them, thereby making them more obdurate, and in a manner desperate.

Paul speakes to King Agrippa, Acts, 26, 27, as though he would teach vs a way to winne sinners, euery worde is a motiue, & shewes, that he which fisheth for soules, had neede to haue many nettes, and obserue time, place, and calling, and fitte all words before in his mind, least he loose his baite. He that hath Pauls spirit, knoweth howe to handle all in due order, both the froward & the gentle disposition, & is wel instructed, both to apply comfort, as well as reproofe. Of all professions the Deuine must be ready to lay his hande in a manner vnder their feete, to winne them vnto GOD, as the the Apostle speaketh. 2. Corinth. 4. 5. Wee preach not our selues, but Christ Iesus the Lord, and our selues your seruaunts for Iesus sake. And reading the Historie of Queene *Katherine Parre*, in the booke of Martyrs, hee may

learne some-what thereby. By nature wee would haue others humble themselues to vs, but Paule humbled himselfe to his inferiours, to make them humble themselues to GOD. Hee that beseecheth, (which is for the most part the Apostles phrase) shall easier perswade, then he that thundreth, and many haue beene drawne with the cordes of loue, which could neuer be hawled with chaynes of iron. God is loue, and his Ministers must speake in loue, or else they doe not speake lyke Paule. Hee that fisheth for soules, and dooth not take this nette, shall fish all day, as Peter fished all night, and caught nothing.

Be wise to beare vvith infirmities, shew thy selfe gentle, that thou mayest the better winne them, and not onely to be as a Father to teach them, but as a Nurse to weane them from vice, as the child is weaned from the breasts, vvhich is doone by all faire meanes. Knovving this that perfections come not vpon a sodaine, Rome vvas not built in a day, nor Troy vanquished in a yeere, stay the time, and the effect vvill shevve great wisedome. In the meane time, vvatch all occasions, and

aduan-

aduantages, and vse all meanes to recouer them, of whom there is any hope: as for the obstinate and the scorner, leaue them to God, who eyther for their further punishment, will giue them vp, or else in his good time will conuert them, and amend what is amisse. And that his doctrine, reprehension, admonition, and exhortation, may be of more force, let him remember that he is no priuate but a publique person, and therfore he must behaue himselfe with all grauity. In this vocation, labours are to be endured, greeuous dangers, hatred, and persecutions are to be expected, & so much the more, by how much more faithfully we shall discharge our duty. The which things our flesh doth meruailously abhorre; all which notwithstanding wee are not therefore to refuse the ministerie, but with a good mind and courage to vndergoe all dangers that may fall out, consecrating our selues, goods, and liues, and all that ere we haue vnto God. More heereof might be spoken, but I referre it vnto another time, when I shall haue leasure to set it downe more orderly.

Application. Applications are as necessary as reprehensions, but many deliuer generall doctrines

trines without applications, forgetting or at least not vnderstanding, they doe but little good, when they speake not to the hart. For this is one of the chiefest points and parts of the ministerie, which hath his vse in teaching, comforting, confuting, exhorting, and the like. Which ought to be done both publiquely in the congregation, and also priuatly in cases of sicknes, and all other afflictions, against the tentations of the deuill, especially in the troubles of a distressed conscience, when as the wisedom of the Minister, shal most appeare.

His wisedom must be seene also, in laying the foundation of his building, and in his order of teaching, which at his first entrance, ought to be obserued. Wherein if his auditorie be learned, it were good to deliuer the principles of Religion briefly; if his people be vnlearned to speake of thẽ more at large, and so to ground all his doctrine there-vpon, and to shew how euery thing may be referred to some part thereof. And they that are most learned, may take it in good part, to heare those thinges which their children and seruants are to be instructed in, and which they themselues had wel-neere forgotten. Our Sauiour

Wise in the order of teaching.

spake

ſpake many thinges vnto the people, but yet in ſuch ſort, as they were able to heare it. Mar.4.33. We haue many things to ſay, ſaith the Apoſtle, Heb. 5. 11. which are hard to be vttered, becauſe ye are dull of hearing. 1. Cor. 3. 2. I gaue you milke to drinke and not meate,for ye were not able to beare it,neither yet now are ye able. According therfore as the congregation is,ſo ought we to apply our ſelues, not to teach miſteries, where principles are to be deliuered , vntill by long cuſtome they haue been throughly exerciſed . Still we ought to regard the capacity of our audirory. 1, Cor.3.1.

Vnderſtanding is to be referred to the mind,but wiſedome is the directour of our particuler affaires,and daily actions,which teacheth,what,when,and how euery thing is to be done. And they are ſaid to be vnvviſe, vvho frame not themſelues accordingly, although they know what is to be done: a great difference there is betwixt contemplation and action , and they that are well learned , are often-times farre to ſeeke heerein. Sometimes he muſt ſhewe himſelfe ſober and graue, that hee be not contemned, ſometimes friendly and fami-

liet,

lier, that hee be not iudged too arrogant and too proude; sometimes hee must vse moderation, and sometimes exhort and entreate those things, which by right may be commaunded and enioyned. But how and when this is to be done, wisedom is to direct. So must they gouerne themselues in their places, that they be rather loued then feared, or else they shall bring all to hauocke, where otherwise they might doe good; and through their troublesome behauiour, they may stirre vp such stormes and tempests, which will not easily be alayed and pacified. And hauing care of so many, hee ought to be as the eye in the head, which ouer-vieweth all other parts, and seeth alwayes what is most fit, necessary, and conuenient. The Lorde in his law cōmanded, that they should offer nothing vnto him that was blind, & a Minister without wisdom, is as one that is blind, who often-times runneth into great discredite, through his owne foolishnes, & ouerthroweth his estate, which otherwise might be of longer continuance. Deut, 1, 13. Moses appointing gouernours, called for men of wisedome and vnderstanding, and such whose behauiour was well tried.

A go-

A Gouernour without wiſedome is like a ſhip without a rudder, which is carried away with euery wind and tempeſt. In their places Miniſters are gouernours, & what manner of gouernours they ought for to be, we may reade Exo. 18.21. They muſt be choſen with all deliberation and aduiſement, ſuch as be men of courage, and not faint-harted; men fearing God, and not of looſe behauiour, whoſe lyues may breede more offence, then their doctrine may doe good; dealing truly without corruption, 1. Pet. 5. rather regarding their duty then their commodity, whoſe behauiour ought to be in ſincerity, without all hipocriſie. And hauing theſe qualities, they are worthy to be ſet ouer thouſands, and ouer hundreds; without theſe, they are not to be placed ouer fifties, no not ouer tenns. Let him gouerne as well by his example, as by his doctrine, let him be forgetfull of iniuries, and ſlow to anger, conſtant & patient in aduerſity, circumſpect and wary in proſperity; let him be giuen to doe good vnto all, to hurt none of ſet purpoſe, and ſo ſhall he eaſily win their harts & good wils, and make a way to doe much good, in his teaching and gouernment. When they thus

Miniſters what manner of gouernours.

thus enter into the straight consideration of theyr duty, they cannot chuse but frame themselues to wisedom; especially vvhen they call to minde, that they are to giue account of the people, committed to theyr charge.

I cannot prosecute all the poyntes of wisdome, which are to be required in a faythfull Minister, because the branches thereof are infinite; and who can well set down what is fit in this case, but many thinges must be left to priuate vse, and perticuler experience, as time & occasion shal serue. Onely I will giue a further cauear, according to the direction of our Sauior Christ, that Ministers learne to be wise as serpents, and innocent as Doues. Among men seeing there are many troubles and dangers, they cannot be too wary. & therefore our Sauiour Christ would not commit himselfe to men, because he knew what was in man, Iohn. 2. 24. 25. The Serpent knowing himselfe to be hated, doth warilie auoyde danger, neither is the Minister inconsiderately to runne into euery danger. And as the harmlesse Doue, fearefull by nature, subiect to many dangers, doth neuerthelesse take her flight, looking vvhen

she shall be strooken or taken, and oftentimes falleth into the hand of the Fowler: So ought not the Minister to be too feare-full, but to goe on in his course, & to commit himselfe to Gods gouernment, and gracious protection, who can turne all aduersities, afflictions, and calamities, to our good, and to the best. Rom. 8. as it fell out to Ioseph. Hee that is to too wary will venture nothing; and againe, hee that is too carelesse, and too secure, shall suddainlie come to a fall.

Such faithfull and vvise Ministers, are seldome preferred by many. For, for the most part in this case, temporall Patrons prouide such, vvho are most fit for theyr commodity, vvho are farre vnfit to minister spirituall foode in due season, for want of learning. And as for giuing bodily food to the poore, & to strangers, they are kept short enough. Yet many Ministers meete not vvith such couetous Patrons, and Church-robbers, God forbid they should, and GOD in his good time, eyther alter theyr minds, or deminish and decrease the number of them. As contrariwise, manie great personages, fauour learning, and set it forwards, whereof we reioyce, and pray

that

that God would blesse them in theyr doo-
ings, that still they may haue care to pro-
mote Gods glory, and to doe good to his
Church.

Blessed is that seruant, whom his Mai- 2.
ster when he commeth shall finde so doo-
ing. Verily I say vnto you, hee shall make
him ruler ouer all his goods.]

He that fulfilleth the law of God, shall The reward.
liue thereby, and hee that is faithfull and
vvise, shall not be without his reward. But
as he is not worthy of a reward, that dooth
his worke by halfes, so none shall receiue
the blessing, but they that holde out to the
end. Blessed is hee vvho when the maister
commeth, shall be founde so dooing, Ro.
chap. 2.7. Math.chap.10.22. Rom.11.22.
Ezech. 18.24. Those Ministers that bee
faithfull, and wise, diligent and painfull,
are hated of the world, scorned, and mis-
vsed: and they that are negligent, carelesse
and good fellowes, are highly esteemed of
in the world, and much made on, but they
knowe not in what danger they are before
GOD. Yet ought this to be no discou-
ragement, to painfull and faythfull Mini-
sters, vvhose reward is not in this life, but
in another, 1,Cor.15.19.

Vntill the time that the Maiſter commeth, is the ſeruaunts tryall, and before the maiſter commeth, he cannot receiue a reward. It is neuer ſaide during this life, It is well done good ſeruant and faithfull: but when wee ſhall be called to our account. And if then wee ſhall be founde to haue done faithful ſeruice, to our liues end, then ſhall wee be receiued to our eternall reſt. According to that comfortable ſaying: Reue. 14, 13. I heard a voyce from heauen ſaying vnto mee, Write, Bleſſed are the dead which heereafter die in the Lord, Euen ſo ſayth the Spirit, for they reſt from theyr labours, and theyr workes followe them. No man is bleſſed before his death, the crowne of reioycing is after this lyfe: and happy is that man that continueth in fayth, hope, and charitie to the end of his life; whoſe delight is in the law of the lord, and whoſe continuall practiſe, is in all godlie and chriſtian exerciſes.

This hope of bleſſednesse, is the thing that euery one aymes at, and fewe doe attaine there-vnto, yet this is the recompence of a faithfull Miniſter; whoſe troubles & afflictions of all men, as they are great, and ſuch as are able to daunt, and to diſcourage

him

him vtterly, (so vnthankfull, froward, and mischieuous is this wicked world, to them that seeke theyr good) yet in the midst of all his extremities, this ought to stay his minde, that hee shall be blessed in another life. This ought also to comfort him, and much to reioyce him, that he hath his maisters good will. For the more faythfull a Steward shal shew himselfe in his maisters affayres, the more shall hee procure vnto him the euill will of the seruants and houshold. The which he must not so much regard, (though it greatly molest and vexe his mind) as he ought especially to consider, eyther the fauour or the displeasure of his Maister, that hath put him in trust.

The faythfull seruaunt shall not labour in vaine, and for nothing, neyther is the Word and promise of God, to be compared to the vnmerciful dealing of many couetous Maisters; who when the seruaunt hath vsed all diligence, and hath been answerable to all trust, that might be required at his hands, and hath spent the best of his time in his affayres, & hath been greatly for his profit, yet hath no care and conscience to reward him, but sends him away empty. But the Lord is most plentifull in

his rewards, and he neuer deceaueth them that put theyr trust in him, but dooth recompence them largely and liberally, euen farre beyond their expectation. Which is well expressed in these wordes, Hee vvill make him Ruler ouer all his goods. So great is the honour that he shall be preferred vnto, being made (in a manner) equall to his maister. As King Pharao vsed Ioseph, Gen. 41, 38. to 45, who because hee founde him to be wise and of vnderstanding, hee set him ouer his house, yea, and made him ruler ouer all the Lande of Egypt, tooke off his Ring from his hand, and put the same vppon Iosephs hand, & arrayed him in garments of fine linnen, and put a golden chayne about his necke, and set him vppon the best Charriot saue one, and put him in all authoritie, onely in the Kings throne, he would be aboue him.

And as Mordecai the Iewe was honoured before his enemies, and his chiefest enemie that sought his death, was commanded by the King Ashuerus to doe him thys honour; and a principall cause hereof, was because hee founde in the Chronicles that Mordecai vvas faithful vnto him, Ester, chap. 6. verse 2, so shall it bee with

faithfull Ministers, they shall bee exalted in the sight of their enemies; Wisd. chap. 5. ver. 1. Then shall the righteous stand in great boldnesse, before the face of such as haue tormented them, and taken away his labours. VVhen they see him, they shall be vexed with horrible feare, and shall be amazed for his wonderfull deliuerance. And shall change theyr minde, and sigh for griefe of minde, and say within themselues. Thys is hee vvhom we sometimes had in derision, and in a parable of reproch. VVee fooles though his life to be madnesse, and his ende vvithout honour. How is he counted among the children of God, and his portion is among the Saints.

And as Mordecai was rewarded for his faythfull seruice, when the King had almost forgotten him, and when hee was in danger of his lyfe, and least looked for a reward, especiallie for so royall a reward, and so high honour and estimation, farre beyond his calling. So must the godlie in thys vvorlde, and especiallie the faythfull and painfull Ministers, they must yeelde all obedience, euen to Gods crosses, and to stay his leysure, vvhen it shall please

please him to thinke of vs; and when wee thinke he hath forgotten vs, and that wee are cleane out of his remembrance, then wil he shew himselfe a gracious and bountifull GOD. For shall there be a liberall thought in man, and shall it not be farre more in God, who hath all riches and treasures, ioyes and blessings at his disposition. Mordecai did not so much as once dreame that he should be arrayed in the royall apparrell, which the King did weare, & that he should be set vpon the King horse, and that the crowne-royall shoulde be placed vppon his head, and that one of the Kings most noble princes shoulde see it performed, and that such a ioyfull proclamation should goe before him; Thus shall it be done vnto the man whom the king wil honour. This resemblance and comparison, may stirre vp the weak minds of faithfull ministers, who through manifold miseries are in a manner discouraged. For the recompence that GOD hath in store for them, is farre greater then can be vttered, or can be imagined: so that the Apostle might well say, Ro. 8. 18. I count that the afflictions of this present time, are not worthy of the glory which shal be shewed

vnto

vnto vs. And although wee may comfort our selues, that wee are the sonnes of God, yet this heapeth infinite comforts vppon vs, to thinke that yet it dooth not appeare what wee shall bee. 1, Iohn.3.2. Knowing that when our ioyfull Redeemer shall appeare, we shall be like him as he is. And if wee continue in our faithfull and painfull endeuours, let vs assure our selues, this saying of Christ pertayneth vnto vs, Luk.22. 29. I appoynt vnto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appoynted vnto me: that yee may eate and drinke at my Table, in my kingdome, and sit on seates, and iudge the twelue Trybes of Israell. Heereof dooth Christ himselfe assure vs, Luk.12.37. Blessed are those seruaunts, whom the Lorde when hee commeth shall finde so waking, verily, I say vnto you, he will gird himselfe about, and make them to sit downe at table, and will come forth & serue them. Setting before themselues the diligence of the Apostle Saint Paule, they may looke for the same recompence, 2, Tim.4.7. I haue fought a good fight, and haue finished my course; & therefore in full hope of Gods mercifull acceptance, he might well comfort himselfe, From henceforth is layd vp

for

for mee, the crowne of righteousnes. And though theyr diligence be not equall to that of the Apostle, yet if it be to the vtmost of our power, the Apostle himselfe dooth put vs in comfort of the same recompence, as wee may read in the same place. Which vnspeakable recompence, is well compared to no lesser a dignitie, then a crowne, which is the chiefest heere in this vvorlde; nay the comparison of a crowne, is inferiour to that reward, seeing the excellencie thereof, neyther eye hath seene, nor eare hath heard, nor hath euer entred into the hart of man. 1.Cor. 2. 9. It behoueth them therefore to consider, that are called to so honourable a worke, as to be Stewards of the most high GOD, the God of heauen and earth, that they performe not theyr charge negligently, but if it be possible, beyond theyr power and strength. For if the cõmon seruants bring in their taske appoynted, how much more painfull must the Steward of the house shewe himselfe to be, who hath a far greater charge? For to what purpose doth the Lord so highly prefer them, but that they should passe all other in faithfulnes, wisedome, and diligence. Generally, all haue a

The negli- gent Mini- ster.

charge to looke to their busines, and to set themselues roundly there-vnto, and therefore slothfulnes and negligence in a Minister, is too great a blot & blemish. If they were sluggish & vnmindful, yet the hope of so excellent & exceeding reward, shold rouse them, & also make thẽ most cheerfull and forward, & to be angry with them selues, to behold their owne backwardnes. What my sonne, & what the sonne of my wombe, & what the sonne of my desires, giue not thy strength to the vanities of this bewitching world. Let no man take thy crowne from thee. Reu.3. 11. but remember how honorable a maister thou seruest, who wil ful wel accept of thy diligence, & recõpence thee more then a hundredfold, Faint not, be not weary. Behold, saith he, I com shortly. & ver.21. To him that ouercommeth, wil I grant to sit with me in my throne. The Angels appeared to the shepherds watching their flocks. Luk.2.8.

But if the euill seruant shal say in his hart,
My master doth defer his cõming, & be- 3
gin to smite his fellowes, &c.] How commendable a faythfull & vvise Minister is, that continueth in his painfull endeuours, stil looking for his Maisters comming, is

appa-

The negligent Minister.

apparant by the description of a negligent Minister. Whose properties beeing compared with the carefull labours of a diligent Minister, doe shew to be farre more odious and intollerable. First in that presuming of his Maisters long stay, he waxeth altogether carelesse of his dutie. Secondly heere-vpon hee groweth also to a further extremitie, in that behauing himselfe very loosely, he giueth himselfe to all disorder and licentiousnes.

VVhen the seruaunts knowe of theyr maisters comming, they will prepare and set all things in a readines, but vvhen they are once perswaded, theyr maisters comming is a farre of, they set all at sixe & seauen, caring not which end goes forward, so they may inioy the world at will. And they thinke rather that he will neuer com, because hee is gone into a farre Country; but the maister leaueth them awhile, to knowe theyr diligence and trustines in his absence. For many in the presence of their Maister, will shewe themselues very diligent, & in his absence altogether as slothfull. But the tryal of a faythful seruaunt is, as much, if not more, in his maisters absence: for these eye-seruants, doe more for feare

feare then for loue, & more for commendation, then vpon a good conscience, more to please men, then to please God, more vpon hypocrisie, then in singlenesse of hart. Colos. 3. 22.

My maister doth deferre his comming.] What is the cause that many thieues and robbers, knowing, yea and beholding the lamentable end & execution, of such maner of people as them-selues are; yet neuerthelesse, eyther cannot or will not take warning thereby, & are purposed to venture all hazards, in hope they shall raigne a long time ere they be taken; and if they be taken, it is but death, and of theyr lyfe they make no reckning. Many also leade a lewd and wicked life, because they think they haue a long time to continue, & they thinke also vpon repentance, all shall be forgiuen; and so presuming vppon Gods mercie, as though eyther repentance or mercy were at theyr commaundement. Knowing not in the meane time, that eyther they may be suddenly taken away, before they haue time to repent, or that for theyr iust punishment, it may please God not to grant them the gift of repentance. The wicked say in their hart, that is, they

Doth defer.

are fully perswaded, they shal neuer be called to account. Psal. 14. 1. The foole hath said in his hart, there is no God, because he seeth that the wicked are not alwaies punished, who are let run on, that their iudgement may be both greater and more iust. 2. Peter. 3. 3. There shall come in the last dayes mockers, which will walke after their lusts, and say, Where is the promise of his comming; for since the Fathers died, all things continue alike from the beginning of the creation. Eze. 12. 22. 25. Zeph. 1. 12. Amos 5. 18. Although Christ doth defer his comming, it is not because hee is slacke concerning his promise, as som men count slacknes, 2. Pet 3. 9 but he is patient toward vs, and would haue no man to perrish, but would all men to com to repentance. The latter day of iudgement, and Christ his comming, are fearefull remembrances, to euil seruaunts, they are matters most certaine and sure to come to passe: we thinke it long, and therefore make bolde to doe what wee list, but wee are certified to the contrary, 1. Pet. 4. 7. Nowe the end of all things is at hand. The time of thy death, which thou knowest not whether it shall be to morrowe, is the day of iudgement

vnto

vnto thee, and the time of Christes comming to call thee to thy accounts. Wherefore put aside thy foolish imagination, that because the maister deferreth his comming, thou maist let loose the raines to all licentiousnes; but let the instruction of the Apostle Saint Peter, in this place be thy direction. Be ye therefore sober and watching vnto prayer. The time of the latter end of the worlde, and of thy last end, is kept close from thee, that thou mayst be alwaies in a readines. The time of deferring the Maisters comming, is no matter whereon thou maist ground; but rather thou must looke for the contrary. The one is foretold, that it shall be suddaine & certaine, but for the other, thou hast neyther proofe nor warrant. And when thou shalt be assured of Christ his comming, so that it shal not be farre of, but that thou mayst looke for it euerie day, and euery howre; the very expectation of so fearefull a presence, so often as it sinkes in our minde, by due consideration, it vvill in hast stirre vp our dull and slumbering sences, and cut off the course of a carelesse & wicked lyfe, and make vs lay aside all vaine and vvorldlie boasting.

So that there is no perswasion more vehement and earnest, then the fearfull consideration of Gods tribunall seate, which none of vs all shal auoyde or be free from. Wherefore, that wee may be stirred up to the due performance of our duties, in our seueral callings, let euery one of vs giue diligent heede there-vnto, setting before our eyes, the suddaine and vnlooked for comming of our lord & Sauior in the clowds, through the long forbearance wherof, the wicked are so forgetfull of God, and of themselues, and are so hardned in sinne. Tit. 2. 11. to 15.

But generally from other degrees of people, we are heere perticulerly to speak of negligent Ministers, who heere are meant by the euill seruaunt. Of whom I woulde to GOD I had no occasion to speake. Neuerthelesse, as in a great number, all be not perfect, all be not blamelesse, so wee will suppose the greatest part to be lights and starres; and if there be any spots in our feasts, I would they were remoued, that there might bee no offence to the Church of God. The first euill propertie of them, is the presuming of the long stay, either of the end of theyr liues, or of the

latter end of the world, of the day of iudgment, & of the comming of our Sauiour Christ, to call them to account, and thereupon they become carelesse of theyr dutie. Following the example of Demas, who forsooke his calling, and embraced this present world. And this foundation is layd of many Ministers, onely to become rich & wealthy, whereby they become vnfit for Gods seruice, for no man can serue two maisters; for leaning to the one, hee must eyther despise, or at leastwise neglect the other. Renowne, estimation, wealth, ease, to hunt after these things, this is farre from feeding. And many parents set forth their children to learning for this intent & purpose, hauing no further consideration, saying within themselues. My sonne shall liue an easie and merry life, he shall get liuings, promotions, and dignities, whereby to pleasure himselfe and his friends. And surely the building followes thereafter. For the most when they come to learning, not forgetting this lesson which they learned of theyr Fathers, doe become greedy catchers of Benefices and promotions, rather then carefull feeders of their flockes, as though to feede, to teach, and instruct,

were some strange matter and farre from their charge. These are they, which if they feed the flock at all, it is rather vppon constraint then willingly, rather for filthy lucre then of a ready minde, rather to inrich their coffers, then to build to themselues a good cōscience, seeking that which is their owne, & not that which is Iesus Christs, 1. Pet. 5. Phi. 2. 21. 2. Cor. 12. 14. And so it falleth out, that the greater maintenance, the lesse care, the greater wealth, the lesse diligence; so that the deceit of riches, and the cares of this world, do not onely choke the Word, and make it vnfruitful in them that heare it, but also doe stop the mouth of the minister that he cannot speake, and weakneth the hand of the sower, that he cannot cast forth his seede. How many Ministers are there, who before they come to wealth and liuing, are very painfull, but afterward fall fast a sleepe, forgetting Gods commandements, forgetting themselues, and their ministerie, & what account heereafter they shall make, Heb. 13. 17. The Apostle exhorteth the people, to obey thē that haue the ouer-sight of them; for they watch (saith he) for your soules, as they that must giue accounts. But these haue the ouer-

sight, and yet watch not; who least thinke of giuing accounts, and yet great accounts shall be required at their hands. They that rule well are worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in the Word and doctrine, 1, Tim, 5, 17, but they that labor not, but in this case shew themselues great loyterers, are worthy great reproofe, who rather seeke the credite of the worlde, then that they will approoue themselues vnto God; whose chiefest desire is to become wealthy, and to inrich themselues by winning soules vnto God, that is theyr least care. Greater wealth they haue from God, then they can haue in this world, for God doth giue them the gyfts and graces of the holie Ghost, whereby they may discharge that waighty calling which is inioyned vnto them. And therfore the Apostle 2, Tim. 1, 14. calleth it a woorthy thing: and fevv there be that haue that ability from god, to deliuer his Word to the edification of the people. But many carelesse ministers loose the precious graces of the holy ghost, and are depriued of that woorthy thing, & rich treasure, through their owne default, and through want of practise. See more hereof in Ma. *Smiths* sermon of *heauenly thrift.*

Math. 5. 13. Ministers are saide to be the salt of the earth, vvhose office is to season man vvith the salt of heauenly doctrine. But if the salt haue lost his sauor, wherwith shal it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, & to be troden vnder foote of men. Meate not onely becommeth vnsauory, for want of salt, but is vtterly lost, through the fault of them that should better see to it; & for want of preaching, the people perrish through theyr fault, that haue the ouer-sight of thē. Acts. 20. 28. Heb. 13. 17. And by this meanes, such negligent Ministers growe out of fauour, not onely with God but also vvith men. For vvho woulde not vtterly dislike that Phisition, that suffereth his patient to die vnder his hand, who if he would haue doone his best, might haue recouered him. Timothy is willed that he should study, & seeke by all endeuours to shewe himselfe a workman, approued of God, that needeth not to be ashamed. But with what face shal hee appeare before Gods tribunall seate, which hath auoyded all painful endeuors, suffring the people cōmitted to his charge to starue for want of spirituall food. Ezec. 33. If the wicked be not admonished, they

shall

shall die in theyr sin, but their blood shall be required at the watchmans hand, at the hand of the slothful Minister. Soules lost, and blood spylt, what recompence can all the wealth of the world make in this case? A good Shepheard is watchfull day and night, as Iacob was, Gene. 31. 40. but the property of an euill shepheard is, that hee careth not which way the sheep doe wander, nor into howe many inconueniences they runne: and these are rather to be termed hirelings then shepheards. Ioh. 10. By his owne example the Apostle declareth the qualities of a true minister, 2. Cor. 11. 27. who spent his time in wearinesse and painfulnes, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and in nakednes. Beside all these things which are outward, saith he, I am combred daily, & haue the care of all the Churches, who rather then he would be troublesome to any, laboured with his handes, to get his liuing, that the gospell by his preaching might haue the more free passage. I would negligent ministers might shake of their slothfulnes, by taking the Apostle for theyr example. Phil. 3. 17. Brethren, be folowers of me, and looke on them which walke so, as

ye haue vs for an exsample. But if there be any whose God is their belly, and whose minde doeth wholy runne vppon earthlie things, let them assure thēselues that theyr glorie shall be to their shame, & that their negligence in Gods affayres, shall turne to theyr destruction. Wherefore in the name of God & in his feare, let not vs make euill ministers and slothfull watchmen our example, but rather as a dashing rocke let vs auoyde theyr negligence, forecasting the dangers that may follow, & let vs goe forward in our vocation, and make an end thereof with feare and trembling, which may make vs more carefull and more diligent; for flesh and blood had neede to be pricked forward, which is soone withdrawn from doing good, by the least hinderaunce that may be. Let vs make straight steps vnto our feet, least that which is halting be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed. Giue all diligence to your profession, & ioyne exhortation with your doctrine, hauing a good conscience in all things; giuing good example to the flocke, and winne the froward, and the contrarie minded, with all gentlenes & patience, & in loue and charitie seeke the amendment

of all that is amisse. But they that are carelesse both of themselues & of their flocke, may wel be compared to the Angel of the church of the Laodiceans, of who we read Re.3.15. where vnder the title of an angell, the minister of that congregation is vnderstood. Vnto whom God saith, I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hote. For what betwixt the care of theyr dutie, wherin they cannot but in cōsciēnce somwhat be touched, and betwixt the cares of this world wherin they are ouerwhelmed, they may wel be termed such, that they are neither hote nor cold. Now then let them heare further, what was said to the minister of the Laodicians, that by his punishment, they may take heed. Therfore because thou art luke-warme, & neither cold nor hote, it wil com to passe, that I shall spew thee out of my mouth. For thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and haue neede of nothing, & knowest not how thou art vvretched, and miserable, and poore, and blind, & naked. As it was sayd to Archippus, so let vs take it to be said to euerie one of vs, that haue the like calling. Colo.4.17. Take heed to the ministery that thou hast receiued in the Lorde, that thou fulfill it, and

and walk wisely toward them that are without: for many seeke by what way and occasion they can, to diffame the Ministers, thereby intending to blaspheme the glorious gospell of Christ, after which they be named. The minister must fight a good fight, hauing fayth and a good conscience, in the performance of theyr ministery, whereof many doe daily make shipwracke. And if they haue care of an incorruptible crowne, 1. Cor. 9. 25. 1. Pet. 5. 4. Let them abstaine from all thinges that may hinder them, and let them endeuour so to runne, that they may obtaine. 2. Tim. 1. 6. Stirre vp the gyft of God which is in you, and quench not the Spirit. 1. Thes. 5. 19. For wherefore hath God giuen the gifts of the holy Spirit, but to the edifying of the Church. Ephe. 4. 12. & he that by his daily exercise, and studious labour, doth not endeuour to increase those gyfts, shal loose them by little and little. And the lamentable experience of these latter dayes dooth shew, that wherein ministers should shew themselues most carefull, that therin theyr negligence doth most appeare. 1. Cor. 4. 5. We preach not our selues, saith the Apostle, but Christ Iesus the Lorde, and our

selues

selues your seruants for Iesus sake. Would God euery minister, could so say, and that his cōscience did not inwardly accuse him, that hee made not himselfe a seruaunt to worldly wealth, and diuers other worldlie hinderances. For surely the prouerb is tru, Religion hath brought forth riches, & the daughter hath deuoured the mother.

These carelesse ministers, may well be cōpared to sleepers; for as they that sleep, exercise no part of their body, so these, as men without conscience, or any feeling & remorce, doe vtterly let goe the consideration of theyr dutie, wherein they cannot shewe themselues too painfull. Therefore let not vs sleepe as doe other. 1. Thes. 5, 6. but let vs watch & be sober. For they that sleepe, sleepe in the night, & they that are drunken, are drunken in the night. And seeing euil ministers put of the day of their maisters comming, let them remember the warning the Apostle S. Peter giueth. 1. Epist. 4, 7. Nowe the end of all thinges is at hand, be ye therefore sober and watching in prayer, watching in your charge & calling. For the day of the Lorde shall come vpon a suddaine, even as the trauell vpon a woman with child, when as euill seruants

and

and slothful ministers, shall not escape the dreadful sentence of iudgement, and the torments of hell which are endlesse.

And begin to smite his fellowes, and to eate and drinke with the drunken.] The second property of an euill seruaunt and negligent Minister is, that presuming of his maisters long stay, and beeing altogether carelesse of his dutie, he behaueth himselfe very loosely, and giueth himselfe to all licentiousnes. Among seruants, in one and the selfe-same house, it so falleth out, that they that are diligent, are hated & enuied of them that are slothfull; so in the house of God, which is his church, the seruaunts are of diuers and contrary qualities, some are wel giuen, and some are set to disdaine, contemne, & despise them; some through care and conscience, are diligent in theyr calling, and other-some that haue little or no care and conscience, thinke it a needlesse curiosity for Ministers to be so diligent.

But that they may better like of painfull ministers, & also make them theyr example to follow, let them behold the charge of a diligent minister, set downe, 2. Tim. 4. 1. I charge thee, saith the Apostle, spea-

king

king vnto Timothy, before God, and before the Lorde Iesus Christ, which shall iudge the quick & dead at his appearing, and in his kingdome, preach the word, be instant in season & out of season, improue, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffring and doctrine. Heb.3. 12. 13. Take heede Brethren, least at any time there be in anie of you, an euill hart and vnfaithfull, to depart away from the liuing GOD. But exhort one another daily, vvhile it is called to day, least any of you be hardned, through the deceitfulnes of sin.

VVho shoulde exhort, if the Minister should not? and also how often he should exhort is heere set downe, that hee should doe it daily. But as learning and knovvledge hath none so great an enemie, as him that is ignorant, so surely the painfull and diligent Ministers, haue no such great enemies, as they that are most slothful, carelesse, & negligent in theyr calling. Hence arise scornfull and disdainfull behauiour, slaunderous, and vntrue reports, and reproches, vvhich are more greeuous to the minde, then stripes are to the flesh and blood, which may be vnderstood vnder smiting of his fellowes.

The Lord by the prophet Esay, chap. 22, 12, 13. doth greatly reproue them, who when they were called to weeping and mourning, gaue themselues to ioy and gladnes, slaying oxen and killing sheepe, eating flesh, and drinking wine, eating & drinking, as though they should die the next morrow. But this iniquity, as there we may reade, was not purged till they dyed. And when Ministers, gaue themselues to spende their time in the vanities and pleasures of this world, as though this vvorld, and the transitory ioyes thereof, were their portion, Wise, 2. 9, it may well be sayde of them, that they thinke theyr maister is far of, & that he will neuer come. So did not Moses that faithfull seruant in gods house, who chose rather to suffer aduersitie vvith the people of God, then to enioy the pleasures of sinne for a season. These that are so giuen to worldly pleasures, the Apostle Saint Iude, ver. 18. termeth to be mockers, which shall arise in the last time, & which shall walke after their owne vngodly lusts, which hauing a shew of godlines, haue denied the power thereof, which turne the grace of God into wantonnesse, shewing heereby whereunto they are ordained.

Whose

Whose worldly and sinfull life, as it ought to be no example vnto vs, so are we willed to auoyde & to turne away from such. Eating and drinking in a moderate sort, is no other, but to bee pertakers of Gods benefites, Eccles,5,18. but to eate and drink & to be drunken, and the excessiue abuse of Gods creatures, shall make ministers (of all kind of people) most guiltie, and to be without all excuse. For to him that knoweth how to doe well, & doth it not, to him it is sinne. Not that it is no sinne to others, but that it is the greater sin to him.

How worthy of reproofe this euill seruaunt and negligent worldly minister is, will better appeare, by comparing him to that minister, who deserueth commendation. 1,Tim.3. He giuen to watching and sobrietie, this to carelesnes and pleasures of this present life: He being harberous, bestowing his goods vpon strangers and the pore, keeping hospitalitie for thē that are worthy thereof; this being couetous, and giuen to spend nothing on the poore, or to good vses: he apt to teach, this will not runne into the hatred of the world, by being too busie, who had rather keepe mens good-will by saying nothing: hee no striker,

ker, this giuen to vnquietnes, and to follow sutes of law, putting vp no wrong, & no iniury, but standing vppon vtmost aduantages: he not couetous, desiring onely that which may serue him for a competent liuing, this wholy bent to his gaine, as though gaine were godlines: hee beeing well reported of, of them which are without, this being not ashamed of those things which may iustly be layd to his charge: he hauing the mistery of fayth in a pure conscience, this maketh no conscience of his behauiour and conuersation, being so bad and scandalous. For as there be many who are painfull and diligent in theyr places, and God increase the number of them, so are there many also, the more is the pittie, who eate & drinke, who spend their time idly, in gaming, in idle exercises, and idle expences. For redresse of vvhose faultes and enormities, good pollitique statutes, and godlie Ecclesiasticall ordinaunces are vvell prouided. And vvere it not for good lawes, much disorder vvould break forth, which by this meanes is most profitably restrayned, and many are made sober against theyr wills.

By these two places of the Scripture follow-

following, this last propertie of an euill Minister is excellently described, and to the full. VVhereof, the first is set downe in Esay, chap. 56. 10. 11. Theyr Watchmen are blinde, they haue no knowledge, they are all dum doggs, they cannot bark, they lye and sleepe, & delight in sleeping. And these greedy dogges can neuer haue enough, and these shepheards vnderstand nothing. For they all looke to theyr owne way, euery one for his aduantage & for his own purpose. The other place wee read, Eze. 34. 2. Woe vnto the shepheards that feed themselues, should not the shepherds feede the flocks? Yee eate the fatte, and clothe you with the vvooll, yee kill them that are fedde, but yee feede not the sheep. The vveake haue yee not strengthned, & the sicke haue yee not healed, neither haue yee bounde vp the broken, nor brought againe that which was driuen away, ney-ther haue yee sought that vvhich was lost, but with crueltie and with rigor haue yee ruled them. Loth I am to speake as these places of Scripture doo induce mee, & rather I could wish that all Ministers, would diligently consider these two places, that those that are good & painfull, may learne fullie what

what is theyr dutie, and still set this as their glasse before them; the negligent & carelesse ministers, beholding heerein, in howe many matters they offend, may learn warily to auoyde, and speedily to amend thē. Three great faults are heere reprooued, where-vnto mans nature is mightily addicted, that is, First ease and idlenes: Secondly, couetousnesse: and thirdly, hard dealing: by which meanes, many worldlie ministers, estrange the minds of those that are committed to theyr charge, whom by theyr discreet and charitable dealing, they might otherwise win. Much wrong is to be put vp, many displeasures to be borne and disgested, some losses and disaduantages are not so greatly to be regarded. Their saluation ought to be of greater account, which is not so easily performed. These things a wise minister, hath in deepe consideration, whereas they that are vndiscreet, see them goe astray in sin, and in offending GOD, and yet they doe neglect them, neither haue they any care to admonish them; if they see them in any distresse of body or soule, they giue them no comfort. But if they owe them any thing, they will sue them to the vttmost, being ouer-

hasty in tything Mint & Annis seede, and letting goe waighty matters, mercy, charity, care of their soules, whom if they might gaine vnto God, it were the richest tith, & the richest commodity, that they might receaue. Being the end, nay the crowne of all their labors, 1. Thess.2,19. and ought to be the very vtmost, of the wishes & desires of a true, godly, and painfull Minister. Who is it now a-daies, that will refuse that which hee may haue, and the excellencie and slauery of a mans minde, is tried in siluer and golde, and worldly commodities, wherein a Minister should shew great wisdome, rather regarding the good estate of his people, then to satisfie his owne hungry desire.

Lastly, to eate and drink with the drunken, is well spoken of them, who of all company make their choise of Athiests & worldlings, rather then of those that be godly and vertuously disposed. Which if they did to win them vnto God, as Christ was conuersant among Publicans and sinners, not to allow of their sinfull life, but rather to draw them out of the kingdome of darknes, and to deliuer them from the snares of the deuill. 2. Tim.2.25.26. It were

Compaying with worldlings.

well done, and worthy of commendation, and their labours well bestowed. But these doe it to a contrary end, to keepe the fauor of the world, caring not in the meane time, how they run into Gods displeasure. Whose mindes by these meanes, by little and little are estranged from their ministerie, and from their vocation, and after a while, they begin to be ashamed of the gospell, being like vnto them whose company they keepe. God commaunded the Israelites to haue especial care not to company with the Canaanites, least they shold learne their manners. For the minde of man is very vnconstant, soone drawne to the woorser part, and flesh and bloode can hardly resist such mighty temptations. VVherefore let them knowe, that as no man can serue two Maisters, God and the vvorlde, so the amity of the vvorlde is the enmity of God, and whosoeuer will be a friend of the world, maketh himselfe the enemy of God. Ia. 4. 4. A true minister is rather to looke for the hatred of the worlde, not that he must purposely seeke it, but let him doe his duty, and discharge a good conscience, and hee shall quicklie finde it. Ioh 3, 20, 21. Luk, 6, 26. Ioh. 15, 19

Ephe.

Ephe.5,5. For this ye know, that no whore-
monger, neither any vncleane person hath
any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ
and of God. Be not therefore compani-
ons with them. But as their company is
infectious, so the company of the godly is
preseruatiue. psalm.18,25. With the ho-
ly thou shalt be holy, and with a perfect
man thou shalt be perfect: with the cleane
thou shalt be cleane, and with the froward
thou shalt learne frowardnes. psalme. 15.
Among them that shall dwell in the taber-
nacle of the Lord, the prophet pronoun-
ceth him to be one, in whose sight a vile
person is contemned, and who honoureth
them that feare the Lord. Who doth well
exhort vs, from his own example, psal. 119.
63. I am a companion of all them that feare
thee, and keepe thy precepts. Againe, psal.
16, 3. All my delight is vppon the Saints
that are vppon the earth, and vpon such
as excell in vertue. He maketh protestati-
on psal.101,5, that he will not know a wic-
ked person, nor giue him any counte-
nance. And in consideration of Gods glo-
ry, he saith that his eyes gush out with wa-
ter, because men keepe not Gods law. psal.
119.136. We can hardly auoid the cōpany

of the wicked, so long as we dwell in this world; 1, Cor. 5, 10, but the godly are greeued with their euill examples, as the soule of righteous Lot, was vexed with the vncleanly conuersation of the wicked. 2. Pet. 2, 7. And heere-hence it ariseth, that the prophet Dauid, Psal. 120. is greeued at the hart, that he must dwel among the wicked. Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell with Meseck, and to haue my habitation among the tents of Cedar. In the meane time, so long as the Ministers and the godly liue in the world, which is so full of offences & corruptions, Phil. 2. 15. let them learne to be blamelesse and pure, as the sonns of God without rebuke, in the midst of a naughty and crooked Nation, among whom they ought to shine, as lights in the world. Mat. 5, 16. 1, Pet. 2, 12. And for their farther comfort, this they may assure themselues, that howsoeuer in this worlde they are troubled with the wicked, yet in the world to come, they shal be altogether free from them. For no Canaanite shal enter or be seene in that heauenly Ierusalem. Zach. 14, 21. nor any vncleane thing. Re. 21. 17.

And for an item, a caueat, and forewarning, to take heede of the company of the

vngodly, let vs consider these waighty reasons. First, that they can minister no matter of true comfort vnto vs, seeing all their waies are full of offence. Secondly, they are strong to draw vs vnto euill, and wee weake to resist, and to shunne their ill example. For flesh and blood without the speciall grace of God, and the assistance of his holy spirit, is easily taken in the snare. The vse therefore heereof, is to teach vs; first, neuer to take any delight in their cōpany, and secondly, to auoid their companie to the vttermost of our power, and where wee cannot, to suspect euen theyr friendship.

But least by the declaration of the properties of an euill seruant & negligent Minister, as also beholding their faults & falls, wee should grow out of loue with Gods word and our christian profession, or else through their offences and scandalous examples, we should fall away from God, & from our owne saluation, by sliding into herisie and papistry, or letting loose the reines to licentiousnes and vngodlines, it is meete & conuenient, that we should speak somwhat, that mens minds might be staid, & better instructed in this matter. Indeed

Howe the euill examples of the ministers are to be interpreted.

many are the examples of offence, whereby the more is the pitty, many hundreds are carried away, and the church of God is not so perfect in this life, but that it hath many blemishes. I must needes confesse, that such euill ministers are a great discredite & disgrace vnto Religion, and who by their euill life, hang millstones about their neckes, too heauy for them to beare, and which shall plunge them downe, not into the depth of the sea, but into the bottome of hell, if they take not heede, and amend betimes and repent.

The ministers of Gods word and truth, ought to be lanternes of good life & conuersation to the world, and if they giue offence, their fault is greater, then if it should come from any of the inferiour sort. Howbeit wee are to consider, that they are not made of so perfect a mold, but that they are subiect to faults, as well as other men. The high priest, the consecrate priest, the holy priest, who only was to enter into the holiest place of all, he was first to offer for him selfe, and for his owne faults, and then for the offences of the people. Heb.9.7. Now although ministers be sinfull men, & some through their faults more in disgrace then

others,

others, as Peter saide, Lord depart from me, for I am a sinfull man, yet are not we therefore to refuse their instruction, but rather to consider, and gladly to receaue the treasure, that is brought vnto vs in earthen vessels. Wee can accept the good tydings, that beggers bring, yea, if they come from our vtter enemies, as the newes of plenty, brought by the foure Leapers, was ioyfull to them of Samaria, 2,King.7. The prophet Esay complaineth that he is a man of polluted lippes. Dauids godly psalmes are not refused for Dauids notorious faults, & Peters periury, hath not vtterly disgraced his godly perswasions. For as coales from the Altar, touching Esayes lips, made them cleane, so repentance was the salue for Peters sore.

VVoe be to them that giue offence, Math. 18, and that wee haue too often in our minds and in our mouthes, being too forvvard to giue sentence of iudgement against others, and by theyr example we make bolde to doe the like, as though theyr offences should be sufficient excuses for vs, making not the right vse of such offences, that is to take heede by them, and not to make them our patternes to follow.

Non

Non viuitur cum perfectis, plenéque sapientibus, the godliest man that is hath his fall, his weakenes, frailties, and infirmities. Pro. 24.16 and many bad examples are too apparant. *Non tamen exemplis viuitur, sed legibus*. It is not the euill example of man, but the direction of Gods worde, which ought to be the rule of our life and of our actions. For thereby wee shall be iudged. Ioh.12.48. Wee shall not be called to account, why wee liued not as such a good Minister gaue vs example, or why we did euill, because such a Minister did offende, but our account shall be, why we haue not liued according to Gods word. Psal. 119.9. Reuel. 20.12. The word is pure of it selfe, though man be sinfull, the cunning and commendable worke of a Mason, or of a painter, is not disgraced for the euill life of the work-man, for the work will shew and cōmend it selfe, & as I said before, treasure is not to be refused, though it be brought in place but basely.

And that you may know what manner of vessels they are, which God doth vse in the ministration of his holiest work in bearing his name before the world, and preaching the gospel of Christ, the richest trea-

sure that euer the earth receaued; they are earthly vessels, made of clay, and shaped of the selfe same mold, whereof all mankind is fashioned. Prophets they are, but as Moses spake, like vnto their brethren, not only in similitude of flesh, but of sinfull & fraile flesh, Ge.5.3. Apostles they are, and Christ chose twelue of them, but Iudas was a deuill incarnate, and Peter was a sathan in his kind, and none were Angels. They are also the men of God, yet men; or if they be Angels, by a more honourable stile, then their nature can beare, Re.2,1. Behold he hath not found stedfastnes in his Angels, Iob.4,18, or if they be starres in the same vision, behold the starres are not pure in his sight. Iob,25,5. From both which places of Iob, is inferred by way of comparison; much lesse they that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, and they are consumed before the moath; much lesse man that is but rottennes, and the sonne of man, that is but a worme. He scarcely beareth a tongue in these dayes, that frameth not this, or such like obiections against vs, They say and doe not; phisition heale thy selfe; you that preach that a man should keepe the law, by brea-

king

king the Law dishonour you God. Ro.2.
What then? If we be worse in your opinions, then the Scribes & Pharises, who had so many woes pronounced against them, yet doe you the part of dutifull auditours. Math. 23,2,3. All that we shal bid you obserue, that obserue and doe; so long as we sit in the chaire of Moses, and Christ, and his Apostles, and teach you no other doctrine & precepts, then they haue deliuered, you need not to feare vs. If we liue well, it is our owne, I meane not onely our praise, but our crowne also: if we teach well, it is yours. Take you the portion which belongeth vnto you, and leaue the other to our selues. If we be carelesse of our owne sores, when your wounds are healed and bound vp by vs; if we as vnprofitable salt good for nothing but to be throwne to the dunghill, bee throwne out in deede, and you seasoned; if wee be cast into darknes, and you illuminated by our light; if when wee haue preached vnto you, our selues become reprobates; if whē we haue shined like lamps & candles in the house, our selues goe out in snuffe and smoke; if when we haue built you an Ark, our selues be drowned; if when we haue guided you
into

into the land of promise, our selues die short of it; if when we haue serued in the temple of the lord, our selues be caried captiue into Babilon, or into som strange land; if when we haue sowed you fields, we reap thē not, & planted you vineyards, we drink not of the wine; and when we haue preached saluation vnto you, we tast not of the fruite thereof, be it vnto vs as we haue deserued. Be not you our Iudges, leaue vs to stand or fall, to our owne Lord; onely vse you the benefit of our labour and trauaile, as God hath appointed it.

If some few be faulty, why should all be misliked, euen in the best times there haue beene euill priests. S. Ierome on the sixt to the Ephesians, on these words, Fathers prouoke not your children to wrath, but bring thē vp in discipline, willeth Bishops and priests diligently to reade that place: who bring vp their sonnes in secular learning, and cause them to read wanton Comedies. Ely the priest was himselfe a holy man, but because hee brought not vp his children in discipline, with due correction, hee fell backwarde and brake his necke. Samuels Sonnes, not vsing them-selues well, caused the people to call for a King.

The

The Bishop therfore saith the same father, is not without fault. whose sonne is eyther disobedient or dissolute. Be it that some such there are, that feed themselues & not the flock, some wicked and irreligious, accounting gaine godlines, that haue made the house of God a den of theeues, that are but spots in our feasts: yet the Lorde be praised, the Lord hath his, who watch ouer Sion day & night, that weepe for her, that pray for her, that preferre Ierusalem in all their mirth, that goe in & out before Gods people, that giue them food in due season, that care for the soules committed to their charge, as men that must giue a straite account, to the searcher of harts & reines.

Doe we approoue the faith by the persons, or the persons by the faith, as sayth Chrisostome. When thou shalt see an vnworthy priest, accuse not his calling, Iudas was a traytor, yet was it not the fault of the Apostolick order, it is the fault of his mind, not of his ministery. As water that runneth through a wooden or leaden pipe, neither washeth away the furrednes of the pipe, nor defileth it selfe, but watereth the garden whither it goeth, & maketh it fruitfull: and as the sun-beames shine through

many

many loathsome places, and yet can neuer purge the place, nor the place pollute thē; euen so the word of God, may be fruitfull to others, when it is fruitlesse in him that teacheth others; it may be a whetstone to giue an edge, or a trumpet to stir vp, when yet we may be as dull as stones, & as heauy as lead. And therefore the Apostle prayeth, that when hee hath taught others, he may not himselfe be found blame-worthy. Good corne is not the woorse for a patcht sacke, nor bad wine the better for a golden cup; no man refuseth gold for the drosse that is mixed with it, nor Roses for the thornes that grow among them. What if Saul be among the prophets? what if Iudas be among the Apostles. If the like measure might be vsed against any estates, against the Nobility of this Land, the Iudges, and Gentlemen, or any other degree besides ministers, for the pretended faults of some few, to ouerturne the estate of all, who might promise to himself one houres security.

Seeing then the matter so standes, that ministers are but men, and the godliest, iustest, and wisest haue had their falls, we are not in this sort to set our selues in extreame hatred

hatred against thẽ, neither to scoffe, taunt, scorne, or libell at their faults, but rather in a fellow-feeling, as though the case were our owne, to pitty them, and to be sorrie for their faults and falls, especially if they proceeded of infirmity, and not of vse and custome. To pray to God that he would vouchsafe in mercy to pardon their faults, and that hee would graunt them better grace, not onely to repent and amend, but also that they offend not againe, in that or the like sort, and that they may continue in grace and goodnes, to their liues end. And that as they haue dishonoured God by their offences, so now they may shewe themselues good examples, to Gods glory, the good of the church, and the satisfying of their owne conscience; that if it be possible, they may recouer what they haue lost, both before God and men.

Furthermore, wee haue in them an example of our owne weaknes, what we are of our selues, & that we might haue fallen into the same, or the like offence; as also we haue occasion to giue GOD thanks, that hitherto wee haue not so fallen into open discredite or shame, though our priuate and particuler sinnes, haue beene

and

and are as odious before God, as theyr knowne offences. Another most profitable vse we gather from hence, that seeing of our own strength we cannot stand vpright, not a day nor an howre without Gods assistance, but that as flesh is frayle, and the deuils temptations strong, so are wee of our selues euery way too weake to resist such firie darts; and therefore dailie and howrely, instantly and earnestly, and humbly to call to GOD for his helpe and grace, to deliuer vs from ouer-throwing temptations, and that God would giue vs strength to ouer-come them, and that hee would giue an issue vnto the temptation, that we may be able to beare it. 1. Cor. 10. 13. And let him that is strongest & most resolute, and in his owne conceite sure, let him take heede least hee fall. For as for the wicked and vngodlie, who are already in the deuils snares, & vnder his thraldome and captiuitie, he taketh no care for theyr back-slyding; but as for thē which yet are not his, he is still about, and stil at theyr elbowe, to prouoke them: he watcheth thee when thou least thinkest of him, night and day hee waites vpon thee, and against him that stands out most, euen against him doth

doth he bend all his forces. These thinges we are warily and heedfully to looke vnto, in respect of our selues; and in respect of them that are fallen, wee are to performe the duty of charity, to doe as we would be done vnto, and to pray to God for them, that they may repent & amende. And that God would renue his holy spirite within them, psal. 51, which is almost extinguished and driuen out, onely some remnant left, as sparkles of fire vnder a heape of ashes. That it would please God, not to cast them off vtterly, as they haue deserued, but rather beholding them with the comfortable & compassionate eye of his grace, he would shew them mercy, as he shewed vnto Peter the Apostle. Gal. 6. 1.

4. That seruants maister wil come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an houre that he is not aware of. And wil cut him off, and giue him his portion with hypocrites. There shall be weeping & gnashing of teeth.]

The punishment of the negligent minister.

As the faithfull seruant and painfull minister, shall haue his blessing & reward, so likewise must the euill seruant and negligent minister, looke to reape according to that he hath sowed, 2. Cor. 5, 10. Gal. 6. 8.

Ro.2.9,12. The punishment therefore of the euill seruant and negligent Minister is two-fold. First, that his expectation shalbe deceiued, and his hope suddenly cut off. And secondly, that his portion shalbe with hypocrites. The grieuousnes of which punishment, is here expressed in these words, that there shal be weeping & gnashing of teeth.

Such euill seruants and negligent Ministers, which presuming of the long stay of their maisters comming, giue themselues to all licentiousnes, hauing no care eyther of theyr inward conscience, or outward conuersation, beeing rocks of offence, and making themselues examples of euill doings, cannot looke for any other, then a iust punishment for theyr due deserts. According as the Lord speaketh by the prophet Ieremy, chap. 9. 9. Shall I not visite them for these things, saith the Lord, or shall not my soule be auenged, on such a Nation as this? Yea, theyr punishment shall be greater then they are aware of, and it shal come more suddainly then they looked for it. And the suddaine ouerthrow of the wicked, shall be farre more terrible, then that which is looked for. For those troubles &

inconueniences, vvhich come vnto vs, whereof wee haue a forwarning, are borne more patiently, and with a more contented minde; but vnlooked for mischiefes, besides the grieuous extremity of them, do greatly amaze our mindes, with the sudden fright thereof. The rich man saide to his soule, Soule, thou hast much goods laid vp for many yeeres, when suddenlie his yeeres, and his dayes, and his long expectation was expired, and finished in one nights warning; O foole, this night shall they take away thy soule from thee. Our latter end, and the day of iudgement, and the comming of Christ, all is kept close, to the intent that through hope of long lyfe, men might not become too presumptuous, in the meane time playing the Atheists, forgetting GOD and themselues. For as though this thing were certaine, that mens liues were to bee prolonged according to their wish and desire, many settle themselues to enioy the pleasures of thys life, spending their time in all vngodlines, making this account, that if they haue but one howre to repent before theyr death, all shall be safe with them. VVho are as farre vvide in their iudgement, as the heauen

uen is from the earth. For when they shal thinke of nothing but of peace and rest, then hastie destruction shall com in place. 1. Thessalonians, chap.5. 3. 1.Corin chap. 15. ver. 5, 32. When as no time or respite of repentance shall be graunted. And manie in theyr death hauing time, yet finde repentance a most harde thing to performe: & that repentance as it is too late, so in a manner it is neuer true and effectuall. Which thing is commonly seene in the lyues of them, whom GOD doth grant to recouer theyr former health after dangerous and desperate diseases, that they returne to theyr olde byas, and become as badde if not vvorse then euer they vvere before.

Others there are of another vaine, Let vs eate and drinke, (say they) for to morrovve vvee shall die: VVhich kinde of people are so farre from loooking for their Masters comming, that they thinke there is no such matter at all; & that after death there is no more remembrance. VVho had great neede to be often put in minde, that they be not deceaued, for such euill wordes doe not onely corrupt their minds that vtter them, but make them also farre

worse that heare them; and euill speeches often-times proue more offensiue, then euill deedes, because we are far more easilie drawne to sin and vice, then to goodnes, and euill wordes doe soone corrupt good manners. Awake therefore to liue righteously, and sin not. For some haue not the knowledge of God; nay many haue the knowledge of God, and yet make theyr Christian profession reprochfull, through their euill behauiour, and to them it may well be so spoken to theyr shame. To whom theyr maisters comming shall be in the twinckling of an eye, vvhen as the dreadfull sound of a trumpet, shall call & summon them in all hast, to appeare before his tribunall seate of iudgement, there to giue their accounts, who no doubt will be found altogether vnprepared and vnreadie.

They vvhich in the vvhole course of theyr life, haue refused the grace of God offred vnto them, and haue not harkned vnto the Lorde, knocking at the doore of theyr harts and consciences, Reu.3.20. shal at the time of theyr death, and in theyr most neede, misse of that grace & fauour, which so often negligently and carelesslie

they

they haue refused and despised. When the time is, let thē accept thereof, god knowes when euer the time shal be againe, and let them take heede it be not said vnto them; The time was, and the time is past. Gods grace and fauour is not at our commaundement, as time and tyde tarrieth no man, so the time of Gods grace must neuer be neglected of any. For such a sudden time of death may come, that all thought of repentance may be out of the way, when as feare and horror shall wholy possesse their mindes.

The second part of the punishment of an euill and negligent minister is, that hee shall be cut of, and that his portion shalbe with hypocrites. He shall be cut of, and separated from the company of the godlie for euer. During this life, the tares and the wheate grow both together, and the wicked shall be mingled with the godly: nay, in this life it so falleth out, that the wicked shall be preferred, and set ouer the godlie, & also are in their company, but in the life to come, then they shall be parted asunder the sheepe from the Goates, the elect frō the reprobates. After death there shall be a separation, and by death they shall be

cut off, they shall haue no part in the ioyes of the elect, they shall haue neyther fellowship nor company with them. They shall not onely be cut off from the companie of the godlie, but also from the presence of G O D. They shall not come into the mount Sion, to the Cittie of the liuing God, the celestiall Ierusalem, neyther to the companie of innumerable Angels. Nor to the congregation of the first borne, that are written in heauen, neyther to the Spirits of iust and perfect men.

But as the Wheate and chaffe are both vppon one floore, till the time of winnoing, and then the winde bloweth away the chaffe, Mathew, chap, 13. 47. In the Net there are all fishes good and badde, but when they come to the Sea-shore, they sit and gather the good into vessels, and cast the badde away. The golde and the drosse are ioyned together inseprably, till it be put in the fire, then the golde goeth one way, and the drosse another. In the time of haruest, the Tares are first gathered, and bound in sheaues to be burnt, but the Wheat being gathered, shalbe brought into the Barne: So shall it be at the end of the world, the time of cutting off, the time

of

of triall, the time of separation, the Angels shal goe foorth, and seuer the bad from among the iust, & shal cast them into a fornace of fire, there shall be wayling & gnashing of teeth. And the shall the iust shine in the kingdome of their Father. This separation shal be farre worse, then was that of king Nabuchadnezzer, Dan. chap. 4, 20 when as the watchman and the Holie one came downe from heauen, and said, Hew downe the tree, and destroy it; for though he vvas driuen from the company of men, to liue among the beasts, being thrust out of his throne, to liue a long time in great dishonour and disgrace, yet he returned againe to his kingdome. But these euill seruaunts and negligent ministers, being once cut off, shall neuer come to theyr place, & neuer recouer their former estate again.

The maister vvhen he cōmeth, shall not only put this euill seruant beside his office, but also he wil cut him off, & separate him, & ioyne his part with hypocrites; vvhich haue the title and name of the office of the gospell, which haue the name of christians, but their liues & behauior are quite cōtrary, betwixt whose inward cōscience, & outward profession there is great difference.

This

This shall be theyr part, that is, theyr inheritance, as the prophet speaketh in the like sence, psal. 16. 6. The Lorde himselfe is the portion of mine inheritance. Hee shall be ioyned with hypocrites, and they shall haue the selfe same punishment. Let euery one therefore haue care and conscience of theyr behauiour in this life, and and make straight steps, and with all innocencie and integritie, direct their course to God, for feare least they meete with the reward of hypocrites. That which is heere set downe, that the euill seruaunt shoulde haue his part with hypocrites, is elswhere expressed, Math. 22. 13. Binde him hand and foote, and cast him into vtter darknes, & chap. 8. 12. For they seemed to be first, but they shall be last. This shall come to passe, to euill seruants, and to hypocrites; that no man may be ignorant, how woful an end they shal come to, how glorious & fayre a shewe soeuer they make in thys world, and before men. For many outwardly pretend great zeale, but the Lord knoweth the hart, vnto whom all secrets are open, and who shall giue vnto euerie one according as his worke shall be. Reu. 22. 12. And neuer let the euill seruant, &

negli-

negligent minister, and counterfaite hypocrite, deceiue themselues, and blind themselues in theyr owne foolish imaginations, posting of the time of theyr maisters comming, for he will come shortly, & though hee stay a thousand yeeres, yet are those yeeres but as one day with the Lord, 2. Pe. 3.8. The hypocrite shall seeme to be in far better case, thē the euill seruant which smiteth his fellowes, and eateth and drinketh with the drunken; but as the hypocrite shall not come into Gods presence, neyther shall be accepted into his fauour, Iob, 13,16. so must not the euill seruaunt and negligent Minister, looke for any better entertainment. The hope of the hypocrite shall be cut off, Iob, 8.13. For he only hopeth which hath a good conscience, & he whom the guilt of an euil conscience doth prick, retireth back from hope, & hopeth nothing but his owne damnation. GOD dealeth fauourably with hypocrites in this world, as he dealt with king Achab, 1. Kin. 21.29. but in another world they shal com to a straighter reckning. The greatest reward the hypocrite hath, is in this life, here they haue the cōmendation of men, which can iudge no further then as they see outwardly-

wardly-

outwardly, but the hypocrite feareth the tryall of God, which sitteth as iudge in his hart and conscience, Wisd. chap. 4. 19, 20. & 5. 14.

That which is heere expressed, that the euill seruant should haue his portion with hypocrites, in the gospell of Luke, chap. 12. is vttered after another sort, that hee should haue his part with infidels and vnbeleeuers. Which how fearfull and horrible it is, wee may reade Reue. 21. 8. The fearefull, and vnbeleeuing, and the abhominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all lyers, shal haue theyr part in the Lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. The God of this world, hath blinded the mindes of the infidels, 2. Cor. 4. and hee hath them in such snares, that there is hard hope of any recouerie. 2. Tim. 2, 26. That euill seruant which shal eate and drinke with the drunken & euill company, that shal forget God, and giue himselfe to the world, that shall wastfullie consume his maisters goods, in filthy sensuall pleasures, & riotous liuing & excesse, what iudge you that such a steward shall haue for his labour. Surely, his Lord and maister

maister shall returne home againe, at such a day when hee was not looked for, and at such an howre as hee was not knowne of; and the sayde seruaunt dooing what-soeuer him lusteth, without feare or care, his Lord shall separate and cut off from his houshold, neyther shal he suffer him there to remaine; but shall reckon him in the number of other vnfaythfull seruaunts, appoynted to receaue but dismall and most vncomfortable rewards. For woes be pronounced to hypocrites, and therefore so like-wise to vnbeleeuers, euill seruaunts, & negligent ministers: lamentation, mourning, and woe.

As the good seruaunt shall be made ruler ouer all his Maisters goods, so shal the euill seruaunt haue his part with infidels, because hee hath beene vnfaithfull in his office, 1, Tim, chap, 5, 8. Hee that prouideth not for his houshold, is worse then an infidell: and these vnfaithfull seruants, shall haue endlesse torments. Wisd, 6, 3. Rule is giuen you of the Lord, which will try your workes. And because yee beeing Officers of his Kingdome, haue not kept the Lawe, nor walked after the will of GOD, horriblie and suddainlie will

hee

hee appeare vnto you. For a hard iudgement shall they haue that beare rule. Principally all euill stewards, vnfaithfull seruants, and negligent ministers, & generallie, all that haue knowledge, if they leade a wicked life, shall haue a greater iudgment, because of theyr knowledge, where-with God hath vouchsafed to open the eyes of theyr minde, that they may discerne betweene good and euill. Luke, 12. That seruant that knew his maisters will, and prepared not himselfe, neither did according to his wil, shalbe beaten with many stripes. For knowledge, without a life aunswerable there-vnto, is like the Letters which Vriah carried against himselfe, it draweth with it a greater iudgement, & oftentimes condemnes the bearer. Knowledge vvithout vertue, leaues a man without excuse, and is a witnesse against him, because hee vnderstandeth what is good, and yet vvill not doe it. Iam. 4. 17. To him that knoweth howe to doe well, and doth it not, to him it is sin. To him it is sin with a witnes; with a witnes of forwarning, with a witnes of a fearful conscience, with a witnesse of Gods displeasure, and of the grieuous punishments that hang ouer our heads.

He

He that wittingly offendeth GOD, is woorthy of the greater iudgement. For if that seruant which ignorantly doth fal into sin, shall not escape punishment, what is he worthy of, who vpon set purpose shall transgresse his maisters commandement? They which haue charge ouer gods people, if they offend, they doe it not vpon ignorance, but beeing ouer-come of theyr owne euill affections, they dishonor theyr Lord and maister, and prouoke his great displeasure against thē. In the mean time, let no man thinke that ignorance shall excuse him from his fault, and from the punishment thereof. For lightly, ignorance commeth through negligence, and many may know, which refuse to know. A great difference is betwixt them that sin of ignorance, and them that violently and furiously rush against the witnesse of theyr own conscience. Let vs therfore pray, that Gods will may be done, & that our rebellious will may yeeld obedience vnto him. And the more froward that we finde our affections, the greater neede haue wee to pray to God for grace. Rom. 7.23. I see an other lawe in my members, rebelling against the law of my minde, & leading me

captiue

captiue vnto the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliuer mee, 2, Cor. 12. 8. I besought the Lord thrice. And he said vnto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; For my power is made perfect through weaknes, Ministers are chosen to bee the light of the world, and the salt of the earth, and therefore greater watchfulnes is required at their handes. Our Sauiour considering mans weaknes and frailtie, and the great charge of his disciples, willeth them instantlie to watch and pray, least temptation should ouercome them, least theyr own vnruly dispositions, shoulde ouer-rule them, least when they had preached to others, they should become like vnto the Carpenters, that made Noahs Arke. 1, Cor, 9, 27.

Wee are all the seruaunts of God, and therefore we ought all of vs, to be painfull in the works of godlines, & they that haue greatest knowledge, and greatest gyfts, & graces frō God, ought to shew themselues good examples, to win other, & not to destroy manie, by giuing great offence. All in thys case are not furnished alike vvith Gods gyfts, and therefore more is requi-red at theyr handes, to whom God hath

shewed

shewed himselfe more beneficiall. He that hath the greater knowledge, must be more circumspect & warie in his behauiour, not only before God who knoweth all things, but also before men, that wee giue no offence, as much as is possible, and to the vtmost of our power. Hee also whom God hath inriched with temporall blessings, seeing God hath put him in trust there-with, must haue care and conscience to be beneficiall, where God appoynteth. Else shall we be like to that euill and vnfaithfull seruaunt, who negligently and vnwillinglie let passe and set light by his maisters commaundement. For he that knoweth howe to doe vvell, and dooth not, heapeth sin, and heapeth vvrath. Many heare Gods Word preached, good exhortations, and good admonitions, and yet sinne wilfully, hauing knowledge & forwarning to forbeare.

The contempt of Gods word shall neuer goe long without punishment. And this was the cause, that made our Sauiour to denounce so great a iudgment, Math. 11, 21. Woe be to thee Chorazin, woe be to thee Bethsaida: for if the great workes vvhich were doone in you, had beene done

done in Tirus and Sidon, they had repented long agone in sack-cloth & ashes. But I say to you, it shall be easier for Tirus and Sidon at the day of iudgement, then for you. The dissolute behauiour of Tirus & Sidon, might haue excuse through ignorance, wherein Gods Word was not preached, to call them to repentance; vvho though they wanted Gods word, yet had they the light of nature, and the lavve of theyr conscience to direct them. But Chorazin and Bethsaida, which heards Gods Word, and yet were neuer the better, shall be worthy of greater iudgement. Whom God doth not vouchsafe of mercy, them he doth iustly appoynt to destruction, and from whom he with-draweth the blessing of his Word, them doth he suffer to perrish, Acts. 16. 6. 7. Againe, to make other without excuse, he causeth his Word to be preached, and that they should be exhorted vnto repentance.

But of all other, the Ministers are heerin to looke to themselues and as they knowe most, so to frame themselues to liue best, and to suspect a fall in the greatest time of theyr strength. 2. Pet. 2. 20. For if they, after they haue escaped from the filthines of

the vvorld, through the knowledge of the Lord, & of the Sauior Iesus Christ, are yet intangled againe and ouercome, the latter end is worse with them then the beginning. For it had beene better for them, not to haue knowne the way of righteousnesse, then after they haue knowne it, to turne from the holy commandement. psal.125. Vnto those that are good and true of hart, the Lord no doubt will doe well. But as for such as turne back vnto their owne wickednes, the Lord shal leade them forth with the euill dooers. It was said to the Scribes and Pharises, who had the interpreting of Gods law, and to deale in Gods affaires. Math.23. Woe be to you Scribes and Pharises, hipocrites, for you shall receiue the greater condemnation. And let the saying of the apostle to the Heb. chap.10.26.27. preuaile, sufficiently to admonish vs. If we sinne willingly, after that wee haue receaued the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sinnes, but a fearefull looking for of iudgement. The Lorde therefore in mercy grant vs his grace, to liue in his feare, & let vs endeuour what

we can,to make an end of our ſaluation with feare and trembling.phil.2.12.and 3.14.And let vs follow hard toward the marke, for the price of the high calling of God in Chriſt Ieſus,and continue ſo vnto the end. For as none ſhal be crowned before the end of their race, ſo before the day of our death, we may fall away from G O D. Solomon that was perfect in Gods ſeruice, yet toward his latter end, his out-landiſh wiues woone his hart vnto idolatry.

This ſecond part of the puniſhment of the euill ſeruant,and negligent miniſter,is aggrauated and made more greeuous,by that which is added thereunto, that their portion & wofull inheritance ſhall be in that place,where ſhall be nothing elſe,but weeping and gnaſhing of teeth, perpetuall ſorrowe without the leaſt taſt of comfort, no not ſo much as the leaſt droppe of colde water ſhall be granted to them,that ſhal be tormented in thoſe flames. Iere.48.10. Curſed be he that doth the work of the Lord negligently. 1.Cor.9.16. They that preach the Goſpell haue nothing to reioyce of, in reſpect of merrit & deſert. Luk.17.9. 10,for

10. for necessity is laid vpon them. But if they preach not, they must looke for a woe. For if they doe it willingly, they haue a rewarde of Gods bountifulnes, but and if they doe it against their will, notwithstanding the dispensation is cõmitted vnto them. I would to God they would consider this, that haue the greatest gifts, and yet vse them least; which are fit instruments to glorifie God, and yet make themselues the vassalls of this present world, forgetting the Apostles earnest perswasion, Ro.12.1. I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye fashion not your selues, like vnto this present world. 1.Iohn,2.17. For the worlde passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that fulfilleth the will of God, abideth for euer. Such hipocrites and loose-liuers, and also carelesse and forgetfull ministers, for their sweet pleasures, where-with they are drunken in this world, taking so deepe a draught of this cuppe of transitory fornication, estranging their harts from God, vnto whom once they had espoused themselues in holy marriage, and giuen their names vnto him, shall be punished with

intollerable torments. And they that by the dutifull performance of their office and calling, would not waite for their maisters comming, but gaue them selues in the meane time, to all libertie and licentiousnes, their laughing shall be turned into weeping, and their songs into gnashing of teeth. The worme of their conscience shall neuer die, & they shall be vexed with perpetuall greefe, for the neglect of their duty; and they shall alwayes weepe and mourne, that they had no better grace. They that behaue themselues most negligentlie, thinke least of all to come to this torment. I could wish that men would betimes looke vnto themselues, and haue a due consideration of their waighty charge; and not so much to be exhorted thereunto, through the feare of hell torments, as to be allured with the consideration of the vnspeakable reward of eternall ioyes. As the Apostle S. Peter 1. Epistle. 5. 4. doth most comfortably perswade all ministers. Feede the flock of God, which dependeth vppon you willingly, and with a ready mind. And when the chiefe sheepheard shall appeare

peare, ye shall receaue an incorruptible crowne of glory. Which he hath promised that cannot lie, and with whom is no variablenes nor shadowing by turning, Iames, 1. 17. Heauen and earth shall passe away, but the promises of GOD shall be most sure and certaine. To which gracious God, be all prayse and thanks-giuing, in the congregation for euer. Amen.

Soli Deo omnis laus, sit et gloria, et gratia.